CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

BARNES BIBLICAL LIBRARY

THE GIFT OF

ALFRED C. BARNES

1889

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
3 1924 092 329 584

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924092329584

THE
GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

EDITOR OF "THE EXPOSITORY TIMES" "THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE"
"THE DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS" AND
"THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS"

ST. MATTHEW

Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street
1914

7467
A 33: 8

B 2410

Printed by
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED,

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, AND CO. LIMITED.
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

CONTENTS

TOPICS.

	PAGE
The Name of Jesus	1
The Magi	17
The Two Baptisms	33
A Question of Life	47
The First Beatitude	65
The Pure in Heart	83
The Salt of the Earth	99
A Conservative Reformer	113
The Lord's Prayer	129
The First Things First	157
The Golden Rule	177
Choosing a Road	193
The Leper	205
The Physician	219
The Ministry of Small Things	237
The Great Invitation	253
Rest under the Yoke	269
My Church	285
The Keys of the Kingdom	301
The Cost of Discipleship	317
The Transfiguration	335
Eternal Life	359
The Ministering Master	377
The Good and Faithful Servant	391
Unto Me	405
The Blood of the Covenant	419
Christ's Parting Charge	435

TEXTS.

ST. MATTHEW.

	PAGE
I. 21	3
II. 1, 2	19
III. 11	35
IV. 4	49
V. 3	67
V. 8	85
V. 13	101
V. 17	115
VI. 9	131
VI. 33	159
VII. 12	179
VII. 13, 14	195
VIII. 2, 3	207
IX. 12	221
X. 42	239
XI. 28	255
XI. 29, 30	271
XVI. 18	287
XVI. 19	303
XVI. 24	319
XVII. 1, 2	337
XIX. 16	361
XX. 28	379
XXV. 21	393
XXV. 40	407
XXVI. 28	421
XXVIII. 18–20	437

The Name of Jesus.

LITERATURE.

Bell (C. D.), *The Name above Every Name*, 1.
Butler (W. J.), *Sermons for Working Men*, 26.
Calthrop (G.), *Pulpit Recollections*, 115.
Cottam (S. E.), *New Sermons for a New Century*, 187.
Deshon (G.), *Sermons for the Ecclesiastical Year*, 74.
Dewhurst (E. M.), *The King and His Servants*, 25.
Edmunds (C. C.), *Sermons on the Gospels*, 77.
English (E.), *Sermons and Homilies*, 43.
Grant (W.), *Christ our Hope*, 175.
Gregg (J.), *Sermons Preached in Trinity Church, Dublin*, 142.
Gwatkin (H. M.), *The Eye for Spiritual Things*, 179.
Harris (S. S.), *The Dignity of Man*, 122.
Hawthorne (J. B.), in *The Southern Baptist Pulpit*, 91.
Kingsley (C.), *Sermons for the Times*, 42.
MacDonald (G.), *The Hope of the Gospel*, 1.
Macgregor (G. H. C.), *The All-Sufficient Saviour*, 9.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew i.–viii., 12.
MacNicol (D. C.), *Some Memories and Memoirs*, 79.
Manning (H. E.), *Sermons*, iv. 44.
Masterman (J. H. B.), *The Challenge of Christ*, 62.
Ramage (W.), *Sermons*, 54.
Smith (G. S.), *Victory over Sin and Death*, 1.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, xxiv. (1878), No. 1434.
Watson (J.), *Respectable Sins*, 163.
Wilson (J. M.), *Truths New and Old*, 41.
Christian World Pulpit, lvi. 186 (L. Abbott).
Churchman's Pulpit: First Sunday after Christmas, iii. 66 (J. S. Goodall).
Record, Jan. 8, 1909 (G. R. Balleine).

The Name of Jesus.

And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.—Matt. i. 21.

1. At the beginning of history, names must be invented; in the course of ages, they become hereditary. The Baptist was about to be called Zacharias, for that was his father's name. But in early times the Hebrews *made* names for their children. The name was often a memorial of some circumstance connected with the birth, or descriptive of the child's appearance, or expressive of the hopes entertained of him. In this last case, the name might turn out to be most inappropriate, and become a sad record of blighted expectations. The first child born into the world was called by a name which betokened the fond hope of his mother that he would prove a treasure to her; but the infamy of his evil life bitterly put to flight that bright dream. Our eyes are dim; we cannot see through the mist of the future, and foretell what our children shall be in after years. We may bestow on them beautiful names, but, to use the striking comparison of Solomon, this fine name may be as a "jewel of gold in a swine's snout," the symbol of qualities of which they are wholly destitute.

2. Had it been left to human wisdom to invent a name for the Child of the Virgin, we can hardly form a guess of what the result would have been. Not a little friendly discussion is sometimes excited by the difficulty of fixing on a name. But this case was peculiar. Here was a Child unlike any that had ever been born of woman. How perplexing it would have been to find a name sufficiently expressive and obviously appropriate. But the point was settled by God Himself. The right to determine the name of the child belongs to the parent; and how infinitely competent in this case was the Father to give His Son

the most suitable name. None knew the Son but the Father, and His decision must be accepted, not only as final, but as the best that could have been come to. The name selected was beautifully simple. A child may be taught to lisp it, and the dullest memory can retain it. Divine greatness is unostentatious. The simplest word in our language is "God," and the next to it is "Jesus."

¶ If thou wilt be well with God, and have grace to rule thy life aright; and come to the joy of love: this name Jesus fasten it so fast in thy heart that it never come out of thy thought. And when thou speakest to Him, and sayest "Jesus" through custom, it shall be in thine ears joy, in thy mouth honey, in thy heart melody.[1]

I.

The Associations of the Name.

1. The name "Jesus" was no new name, coined in the courts of heaven, and carried to earth for the first time by the lips of the angel messenger. A new name is cold and meaningless, and stirs no memories of the past. There is a warmth about an old familiar name which no new combination of letters can ever hope to rival, and so it was an old name, a name with a history behind it, that the angel gave to the unborn Son of Mary. There was more than one little Jewish boy who bore that name at that very time. In the high priest's family alone there were no less than three, each of whom would one day be high priest in his turn. There was Jesus, son of Sapphia, who would one day become a famous brigand chief, and, still more famous, Jesus surnamed Barabbas, whom the people would prefer one day to Jesus surnamed Christ. There was Jesus Justus, who would one day become the trusted helper of St. Paul, and Jesus the father of Elymas, the sorcerer, St. Paul's opponent in Cyprus. There was Jesus the friend of Josephus, and Jesus Thebuti the priest, and Jesus the peasant, who would one day terrify Jerusalem with his cries. Over many a little living Jesus a mother's head was bending on the day when Mary clasped her new-born baby to her bosom. How came it that so many boys were called by the

[1] Richard Rolle.

same name? We know what makes a name popular at the present day; it is because that name is borne by the popular hero of the hour. How many girls were christened Florence, after the lady with the lamp! The Boer war produced a never-ending crop of little Roberts. And so it has always been. Those Jewish boys were all called Jesus after two great national heroes who had borne that name in the past.

2. Who were those heroes? Where do we find the name "Jesus" in the Old Testament? We do not find it anywhere, nor do we expect to find it; for we are all familiar with the way a name changes as it passes from one language to another—how, for example, the Hebrew Johanan becomes in English John, and in German Hans, and in Russian Ivan, and in Spanish Juan, and in Italian Giovanni; the name is the same, but the form varies according to the language. Now the Old Testament and the New Testament were written in different languages. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament was written in Greek; and thus the same names appear under different forms. Elijah, for example, in the New Testament is always called Elias. And so when we search the Hebrew Old Testament for the Greek name Jesus we shall expect to find some change in the spelling.

(1) As a matter of fact we meet the name for the first time in the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers and the sixteenth verse, where we read that "Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua" (which means "Jehovah is salvation"). Jesus and Joshua are exactly the same name, only one is the Greek form and the other is the Hebrew. Joshua the son of Nun the commander-in-chief of the Lord's people, under whom they conquered their inheritance, the leader who brought them out of the desert to the land of milk and honey, the captain who ever led them to victory, though foes were strong and crafty, the ruler who settled every family in the precise position which God appointed for it, and there gave it rest—he is the first who bears the name "Jesus" in the pages of history.

(2) But this Jesus died, and the centuries passed on, and a time came when the people lost the land that had been given them, when for their sins they were carried away captive to

Babylon, and then, after forty miserable years, the second Jesus came—Jeshua the high priest, who led the people back to the land that had been lost by sin; Jeshua, who rebuilt the Temple and restored the worship of God; Jeshua, who was crowned with gold by the prophet Zechariah, as the type and forerunner of a greater High Priest who was to come; Jeshua, the son of Jehozadak, was the second Jesus in history.

3. And now we can appreciate something of the associations of the name; we can realize a little of what the message, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," would mean to a pious Jew like Joseph. Thou shalt name Him after the great captain who drove the Canaanites from the land. Thou shalt name Him after the great high priest who brought back the people out of bondage. Thou shalt call Him Jesus; for He, too, shall be a Saviour. "He shall save his people from their sins."

¶ Man is the principle of the religion of the Neo-Hegelians, and intellect is the climax of man. Their religion, then, is the religion of intellect. There you have the two worlds: Christianity brings and preaches salvation by the conversion of the will, —humanism by the emancipation of the mind. One attacks the heart, the other the brain. Both wish to enable man to reach his ideal. But the ideal suffers, if not by its content, at least by the disposition of its content, by the predominance and sovereignty given to this or that inner power. For one, the mind is the organ of the soul; for the other, the soul is an inferior state of the mind; the one wishes to enlighten by making better, the other to make better by enlightening. It is the difference between Socrates and Jesus. *The cardinal question is that of sin.* The question of immanence or of dualism is secondary. The Trinity, the life to come, paradise and hell, may cease to be dogmas and spiritual realities, the form and the letter may vanish away,—the question of humanity remains: What is it which saves?[1]

II.

The Meaning of the Name.

1. In one sense, there is nothing in a name. The nature of the thing is independent of it. It is not in the power of any name

[1] *Amiel's Journal* (trans. by Mrs. Humphry Ward), 11.

to make evil good, or good evil; and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, would have been what He is, by whatever name He had been called. But in another view there is something in a name. It stands for the thing, and, through frequent use, comes to be identified with it. It is therefore of the highest moment that the name should correspond with the thing, and convey a correct idea of it. Exactness of thought requires exactness of language. Knowledge depends for its accuracy on the right use of words, and the great instructors of mankind are as careful of the expression as of the idea. Words are things. We deal with them, not as sounds but as substances, and look not so much at them as at the verities in them. Names are persons. When one is mentioned in our hearing, it brings the man before us, and awakens the feelings which would be excited if he were present himself.

Now, we may see this, above all, in the adorable name of Jesus. That name, above all others, ought to show us what a name means; for it is the name of the Son of Man, the one perfect and sinless man, the pattern of all men; and therefore it must be a perfect name, and a pattern for all names. And it was given to the Lord not by man, but by God; and therefore it must show and mean not merely some outward accident about Him, something which He seemed to be, or looked like, in men's eyes; no, the name of Jesus must mean what the Lord was in the sight of His Father in Heaven; what He was in the eternal purpose of God the Father; what He was, really and absolutely, in Himself; it must mean and declare the very substance of His being. And so, indeed, it does; for the adorable name of Jesus means nothing else but God the Saviour —God who saves. This is His name, and was, and ever will be. This name He fulfilled on earth, and proved it to be His character, His exact description, His very name, in short, which made Him different from all other beings in heaven or earth, create or uncreate; and therefore He bears His name to all eternity, for a mark of what He has been, and is, and will be for ever—God the Saviour; and this is the perfect name, the pattern of all other names of men.

¶ When Adam named all the beasts, we read that whatsoever he called any beast, that was the name of it. The names which he gave described each beast; they were taken from something

in its appearance, or its ways and habits, and so each was its right name, the name which expressed its nature. And so now, when learned men discover animals or plants in foreign countries, they do not give them names at random, but take care to invent names for them which may describe their natures, and make people understand what they are like. And much more, in old times, had the names of men a meaning. If it was reasonable to give names full of meaning to each kind of dumb animal, much more to each man separately, for each man has a character different from all others, a calling different from all others, and therefore he ought to have his own name separate from all others. Accordingly in old times it was the custom to give each child a separate name, which had a meaning in it which was, as it were, a description of the child, or of something particular about the child.[1]

2. The name "Jesus," then, means Saviour. What does He save men from?

(1) Jesus saves from ignorance. If we consider the incarnate life of the Son of God as a theophany and a revealing, we see at once what power it had, and still has, to rescue man from the blind error which is a part of sin. In Jesus, man sees God as He is. And awakened by this vision, he sees time and the world as they really are. The false theories of life on which he proceeds are all contradicted in Him. Every falsehood which the world's enchantment tells, every delusion which it weaves with its Circean spell, finds its refutation in Him. Part of the power of sin lies in its specious delusions. Among these delusions is the lie that the world is all; the lie that sensual pleasure is good, that passion is strong, that pride is majestic, that disobedience is wise. Jesus came and refuted all these immemorial lies.

(2) But if He is only a lawgiver, or a teacher of Divine truth, or a finger-board to direct us in the way of righteousness, He is insufficient for our needs. The man who teaches me the truth is not himself the truth. And if Jesus is only a teacher of the way of salvation, He is not Himself salvation. It is true that man is sadly and fearfully ignorant both of himself and of the infinite God to whom he must give account for the deeds done in the body; and it is also true that by coming to Christ he can be relieved of this ignorance. But if Jesus is only a pedagogue or

[1] C. Kingsley.

schoolmaster, He does not touch the deepest necessities of man's condition. Such a view of Him may improve a man's morals, and elevate him somewhat in other respects, but it can never save him from the power and consequences of sin. Jesus is Himself the salvation which He taught, and which He commissioned His disciples to preach. He is the wisdom, the grace, the mercy, and the power that save men from their sins.

¶ As Laurence Oliphant lay dying, the dear and sacred name of Jesus was ever on his tongue. There had been times in his life when he had spoken it with an accent of perhaps less reverence than was congenial to listeners probably less devout than he, but holding a more absolute view of our Lord's position and work —as there had been times when he had called himself not a Christian, in the ordinary meaning of the word. But no one could doubt now of his entire and loving reception of that name as his own highest hope as well as that of all the world. A day or two before his death he called his faithful nurse early in the morning, probably in that rising of the energies which comes with the brightness of the day, and told her that he was "unspeakably happy." "Christ has touched me. He has held me in His arms. I am changed—He has changed me. Never again can I be the same, for His power has cleansed me; I am a new man." "Then he looked at me yearningly," she adds, "and said, 'Do you understand?'" [1]

¶ Many years ago there was a great famine of water in a town in the south of France. It was a hot summer, no rain fell for months, and as the people always suffered from the want of water, this dry, hot season greatly increased their sufferings, and many of them died. A few miles away from the town was a range of hills; in the hills were some beautiful springs of water, but the labour and expense of bringing the water from the springs to the town was so great that very little of it could be brought. In this town there lived a young man whom we shall call Jean. He was industrious and good, and was shortly to be married to a beautiful young woman, whom he dearly loved. But all at once the marriage was put off, the young man began to go about in old clothes, took very little to eat, gave up his pleasant home and went to live in a garret, and, in short, became a thorough miser. He went to bed in the dark to save candle, begged other people's cast-off clothing, and very soon became changed from a blithe and happy young man into a wretched-looking old one. Nobody loved him now. His charming bride forgot him, and married

[1] M. O. W. Oliphant, *Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant*, 403.

another man; the children called him names in the streets, and everybody shunned his house. After many years of wretchedness he died. When his relatives went to search his room they found him almost wasted to a skeleton, and all his furniture sold, while the old man's body was lying upon a heap of straw. Under his head they found a will, and what do you think was in it? This: that in that dreadful summer, forty years ago, Jean had been so saddened by the dreadful suffering of the people—especially of the children—for want of water, that he had given up his young bride, his pleasant home, his happy prospects, and had devoted himself day and night all through the weary years to working and saving, so that the people might have the beautiful water brought to them from the distant springs in the hillside. Oh, how everybody blessed that old man! A reservoir was made in the hills, pipes were laid under the ground, and the water was brought into the town so freely that its inhabitants never thirsted any more. The old man did not create the water, neither did he make the people thirst, he simply brought the living water and the dying people together—and he sacrificed himself in doing it. Now that is just how Jesus saves men. He did not make God love them—God always loved them. He did not create God's love or mercy—those great springs of blessing were and always are in the great heart of God. He did not make men sinful and sad so that they needed these things; but He brought these springs of love and blessing down to the men that were dying for the need of them. He is the channel through which God's love comes to us. From God, but through Christ, we receive all the blessings of salvation. Jesus brought all these good things to us, and sacrificed Himself in doing so.[1]

(3) But if man is to be saved, he must be saved not only from sin's guilt, and sin's defilement, but from sin's power. If man is to be fully saved, not only must he, in the infinite mercy of God, be treated as righteous, he must become actually righteous and holy and good. This is the ultimate purpose of God. He removes man's condemnation, He forgives man's sin, in order that he may become holy. Forgiveness and justification are in order to holiness. But man cannot be personally holy until he is set free from the enslaving power of sin. He, therefore, who would be the Saviour of man must deal with this. How does Jesus deal with it? He deals with it as our Lord and King, dwelling and reigning within us by the Holy Ghost. Remember, the Jesus

[1] J. Colwell.

who shall save His people from their sins is One who lives. He is One who is possessed of all power. He takes men so into union with Himself that they are within the circle of His life. They are in Him as the branch is in the vine. So their weakness is turned into might, by the advent of His strength into their lives. The sin which strives to enslave the believer finds that it has to deal with the believer's Lord. And by that Lord it is defeated; its power is broken and its dominion for ever overthrown. The disease which we cannot shake off flies before Him; the fire which we could not quench is by Him put out; the evil root is eradicated, the mighty current stemmed. The strong man armed meets the stronger than he, and is despoiled. In Him we conquer sin. His power turns the scale of battle in our favour. Sin has not dominion over us. The law of the spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death. So we not only will the will of God, but also do it. He makes us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ our Lord.

¶ The one cure for any organism is to be set right—to have all its parts brought into harmony with each other; the one comfort is to know this cure in process. Rightness alone is cure. The return of the organism to its true self is its only possible ease. To free a man from suffering, he must be set right, put in health; and the health at the root of man's being, his rightness, is to be free from wrongness, that is, from sin. A man is right when there is no wrong in him. The wrong, the evil, is in him; he must be set free from it. I do not mean set free from the sins he has done; that will follow; I mean the sins he is doing, or is capable of doing; the sins in his being which spoil his nature, the wrongness in him, the evil he consents to; the sin he is, which makes him do the sin he does. To save a man from his sins is to say to him, in sense perfect and eternal, "Rise up and walk. Be at liberty in thy essential being. Be free as the Son of God is free." To do this for us Jesus was born and remains born to all the ages.[1]

[1] George MacDonald, *The Hope of the Gospel*, 5.

III.

The Power of the Name.

1. The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," and to-day what name is there so great as this? What other so enduring? It has lived through anarchy and revolution, through storm and change, decay and death. Other names since then, and many of them accounted great—names which held the world in awe, which blanched the cheek, and made men tremble—have passed into oblivion; but this name is as fresh as ever, and far more powerful than it was of old. It is the earliest name that Christian parents breathe into their children's ears; the first they teach them to lisp, as they lie in their lap, or stand at their knee. It is the gracious name woven into all our prayers and mingling with all our praises.

It is the great name which many a learned and holy man has felt it his highest privilege, his most sacred duty, to proclaim. It is the precious name which the evangelist takes to the poorest and most wretched alleys of our cities and towns, knowing that it can lift the burden of sin and sorrow from the soul, and fill it with peace and purity and strength. It is the all-powerful name which the Church is occupied in sending to the farthest places of the earth, that the nations may be turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." It is the hallowed name in which the civilized peoples of the globe enact their laws, crown their kings, fight their battles, and celebrate their victories. It is the Divine name on whose authority we sanctify the dearest relationships of life, baptize the child at the font, bless the union at the marriage altar, and commit our dead to the grave. And wherever this name is proclaimed, it is inspiring faith, hope, and love. Many who hear it place their trust in the Saviour, and look to Him as the Source of all blessing, the Well-spring of all joy.

¶ Who does not know what is the power of the name of father or mother, sister or brother? What visions they bring back upon us: what a stream of memories; of years long passed away, of careless childhood, bright mornings, lingering twilights, the early dawn, the evening star, and all the long-vanished world of happy,

unanxious thoughts, with the loves, hopes, smiles, and tenderness of days gone by. Who does not know what visions of maturer life come and go with the sound of a name, of one familiar word —the symbol of a whole order now no more? The greater part of our consciousness is summed up in memory; the present is but a moment, ever flowing, past almost as soon as come. Our life is either behind us or before; the future in hope and expectation, the past in trial and remembrance. Our life to come is little realized as yet; we have some dim outlines of things unseen, forecastings of realities behind the veil, and objects of faith beyond the grave; but all this is too Divine and high. We can hardly conceive it; at best faintly, often not at all. Our chief consciousness of life is in the past, which yet hangs about us as an atmosphere peopled with forms and memories. They live for us now in names, beloved and blessed.[1]

2. There is nothing which His name has not hallowed and glorified. The commonest things of earth have now a higher and holier meaning than they ever had before, or ever could have had without Him. A virtue has flowed out of Him into everything He has touched. Has not labour become nobler since He sat at Nazareth on the carpenter's bench? Has not childhood become more sacred since He took little children up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them? Has not woman been elevated since He lay in a woman's arms, and was clasped to a woman's heart? Has not penitence become more holy since the Magdalen fell at His feet to wash them with her tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head? Has not sorrow been more heavenly since the "Man of Sorrows" wept bitter tears, cried out in the agony of His bloody sweat, and suffered on Calvary? Has not death changed its character since He died and, robbing the arch-fiend of his sting and turning the tide of battle, wrested from the last enemy the victory? Has not the grave become brighter since He lay in the rocky tomb under linen napkin and shroud? The very cross itself, that "accursed tree," that symbol of shame, has been transfigured into an emblem of all that is dearest to the Christian heart or that is holiest in the Christian faith. And not only things but persons also have been transfigured by contact with Jesus. Sinners have become saints; fishermen, apostles; publicans, disciples. A persecuting and

[1] H. E. Manning, *Sermons*, iv. 46.

blaspheming Saul has been changed into a holy and loving Paul. It may be recorded of all who drew near Him that "as many as touched were made perfectly whole." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

¶ The Saviour of the world must heal not only the breach between God and man, but the sickness of human nature itself. And this He does by implanting in man, through union with His own perfect nature, a supernatural principle of regeneration; a germ of new life which may destroy the cause of corruption, and arrest its progress, and make human nature again capable of union with God. The corrupt nature struggles still, seeks for its separate life away from God, a life that is no life. But the moment the new life is given, the helplessness, the hopelessness of the struggle is past. The cry of human nature, "I cannot do the things that I would," becomes the thankful utterance of the regenerate soul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."[1]

3. The name still works as a charm. As long as there is sin in the world, and sorrow, broken hearts and wounded spirits; as long as there are chambers of sickness and death-beds, so long will the name of Jesus have power. The saving wonders wrought by Him who bears the name are continued to-day. They are continued in the thousands of assemblies which are met in toiling cities, crowded towns and scattered villages, in solitary hamlets and on heath-clad moors, and in lonely ships ploughing the mighty deep. Everywhere where men of like passions with ourselves have gathered to worship God, Christ has thrown open the doors of heaven, and has sent down His Spirit to renew, to sanctify, to strengthen, and to console. Many shall be born again into the Kingdom of God, and be saved from their sins, and, receiving pardon, shall be given power to wrestle down strong temptations, and shall go forth inspired with a new hope and girt with a new strength, to be purer, better, wiser, more humble, more peaceful; and all the week shall be brighter because of the worship of His name on His own day.

¶ It was in the course of these sermons delivered at Venice, and in the cities of Venetia, that Bernardine's zeal for the propagation of devotion to the holy name of Jesus first began openly to assert

[1] Aubrey L. Moore, *Some Aspects of Sin.*

itself. This devotion, which may be said to date back to the Pauline saying, *In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur*, had been specially fostered by the Franciscan order. We find St. Francis of Assisi making it the theme of many pious exhortations, while the holy name never crossed his lips without his voice faltering as though he were inwardly entranced by a heavenly melody. Nor was his example lost on St. Bonaventure, the author of a leaflet, *De laude melliflui nomini Jesu.* Bernardine was, therefore, no innovator in striving to rekindle popular fervour towards a devotion which, though heretofore greatly in vogue, had, in his day, been cast somewhat into the shade. In his sermons our saint was for ever extolling the beauty and majesty, the mystery and efficacy of the name of Jesus, and, in order outwardly to embody the sentiments of piety he sought to instil into their hearts, we find him calling upon his hearers to inscribe the holy Name or one of its customary abbreviations on the walls alike of public buildings and of private houses. He himself had adopted the monogram I.H.S., which he loved to see surrounded by a circle of golden rays. And the adoption of this symbol he deemed particularly opportune in a land so overrun by paganism, since he hoped to see the same substituted for the Guelf and Ghibelline emblems with which the walls then literally swarmed, and so to set an outward seal on inward peace of heart. And the practice was adopted, and spread like wildfire throughout Venetia, where both officials and private individuals vied with one another in everywhere printing or carving the sacred monogram, encircled by rays, until it finally became significant of Bernardine's passage and of the popular assent to his word.[1]

[1] P. Thureau-Dangin, *Saint Bernardine of Siena* (trans. by Baroness G. von Hügel), 66.

The Magi.

LITERATURE.

Aitken (W. H. M. H.), *The Revealer Revealed*, 17.
Alexander (W.), *The Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, 49.
Brooke (S. A.), *The Early Life of Jesus*, 26.
Burrell (D. J.), *The Religion of the Future*, 97.
„ „ *The Wondrous Cross*, 124.
Davies (D.), *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, i. 403.
Eames (J.), *The Shattered Temple*, 69.
Hall (C. R.), *Advent to Whit-Sunday*, 54.
Holland (H. S.), *Vital Values*, 24.
Hort (F. J. A.), *Cambridge and other Sermons*, 25.
Hunt (A. N.), *Sermons for the Christian Year*, i. 56.
Jones (J. C.), *Studies in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 27.
Liddon (H. P.), *Christmastide Sermons*, 348.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions* : St. Matthew i.–viii., 19.
Morgan (G. C.), *The Crises of the Christ*, 74.
Mursell (W. A.), *Sermons on Special Occasions*, 107.
Parker (J.), *City Temple Pulpit*, v. 2.
Robertson (F. W.), *Sermons*, ii. 17.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, xvi. (1870), No. 967; xxix. (1883), No. 1698.
Tipple (S. A.), *The Admiring Guest*, 60.
Wilberforce (B.), *The Hope that is in Me*, 52.
Christian Age, xli. 36 (T. de W. Talmage); xlvi. 386 (P. Brooks).
Christian World Pulpit, xlix. 40 (A. G. Brown); lvii. 33 (H. S. Holland); lxxii. 580 (A. H. Sime); lxxiv. 403 (L. A. Crandall).
Churchman's Pulpit : The Epiphany, iii. 226 (F. Field).
Homiletic Review, lvi. 460 (F. W. Luce).

The Magi.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.—Matt. ii. 1, 2.

In the visit of the Magi we have an incident of surpassing imaginative beauty. All through the ages it has been glorified by pencil and song. Yet, singular to say, the Epiphany is the only scene in the sublime opening of the drama of the life of Jesus for which St. Matthew claims no prophecy whatever. We are tempted to think that he might have referred to Balaam's language (Num. xxiv. 17). The Church in her Epiphany services has seen the bending forms of kings in the dim magnificence of the language of psalmist and seer (Ps. lxxii. 10–15; Isa. lx. 6). Still the fact remains that over the Epiphany alone in these two chapters St. Matthew makes us hear no joy-bells of prophecy filling the air. If he had foreseen that he would be accused of translating a picture of prophecy into the language of fact, he could scarcely have taken a more effectual way of defending himself than by omitting between vv. 11 and 12 of chap. ii. his familiar formula, "that it might be fulfilled."

¶ The Christians in the second century, discontented with the extreme plainness of the story in the Gospels, embellished it largely. We are told that the star sparkled more brilliantly than all the others in the sky. It was a strange and wondrous sight, for the moon and all the stars formed, as if in homage, a choir around it as it moved.

Later on the wise men are represented as princes, then as kings. They symbolize the Trinity. They are the lords of the three races of men. Their gifts have spiritual, then doctrinal, meanings. They are supplied with names and are made the patron saints of travellers. As the legend grew, and Art took it up, they arrive at Bethlehem attended by a great crowd of followers, splendidly dressed, and riding on horses and camels and

bearing treasures. Kneeling in their royal robes, they adore the child in the manger, and the child bends forward to bless them.

Then come all the stories connected with them after their death. Their bodies rested for a long time in the magnificent temple that Eastern Christianity dedicated to the Divine Wisdom, which still bears that ancient title, though Mohammed claims it now instead of Christ. Milan received them next, and lost them; and now for six hundred years the great cathedral of the Rhine has grown up above their sacred bones, representing in its gradual up-building, and for a long time in its unfinished glory, not only the slow accretion of splendid and poetic thoughts around the solitary and ancient story, but also the growth of all those stories to which we give the name of myths.[1]

¶ From time immemorial they have been regarded as kings:

> We three kings of Orient are,
> Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
> Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
> Following yonder star.

In the cathedral at Cologne there is a golden reliquary in which are preserved, in the odour of sanctity, the relics of these men. I said to the venerable monk in attendance, "Do you really believe that these are the relics of the wise men?" "Oh yes," he replied, "there is no question whatever as to their genuineness; we know their names—Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. The Venerable Bede tells all about them."[2]

I.

Seeking a King.

1. The wise men came from the East. They came from beyond the bounds of that chosen and favoured Israel whose were the covenants, the oracles, the fires of Sinai, the glory of Zion, and the faith of the fathers. They came, doubtless, from Persia. Their business was a vain attempt to read the fortunes of empires and of men by watching the changing positions and mutual attractions of the stars. No plainer revelation of God's loving-kindness and wisdom stood before their eyes than the cold

[1] S. A. Brooke, *The Early Life of Jesus*, 27.
[2] D. J. Burrell, *The Religion of the Future*, 99.

splendours of the midnight sky. The heavenly commandment and promise they must spell out in the mystic syllables of the constellations, or else grope on in darkness. The sun was the burning eye of an Unknown Deity. With night-long solemn vigils, they strained their eyes into the heavens; but they saw no "Heaven of heavens," because they saw no Father of forgiveness, and no heart of love. Their prophet was Zoroaster —a mysterious, if not quite mythical, person, ever vanishing in the shadows of an uncertain antiquity. These were the men whom God was leading to Bethlehem, representatives of that whole pagan world which He would draw to the Saviour.

Yet these disciples of Zoroaster held the best religion of their time, outside of Judaism. Their sacred books prove them to have been no degraded or sensual idolaters. When they fed their sacred fires with spices and fragrant wood, it was not the fire they worshipped, but a strange and unseen Light, of which the fire was a symbol. Their Ormuzd was an Infinite Spirit, and the star spirits were his bright subordinates. They believed in immortality, in judgment, in prayer, in the sacredness of marriage, in obedience, in honesty; they practised carefully most of the virtues of the Christian morality, including that foundation one of truthfulness, which is rare enough in both East and West, and which Christianity has found it so hard to establish in public and in private life, in all its centuries of discipline. To this day, when the traveller or the merchant meets among the native eastern cities a man more intelligent, more upright, of nobler manners and gentler hospitality than the rest, he is almost sure to find him a Parsi, a descendant of those Zoroastrian students of the stars, brethren or children of the wise men who offered their gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Messiah in the stable.

2. These wise men looked for a King. "Where is he," they asked, "that is born King of the Jews?" Why did their expectations take this form? We could understand their longing for one who should give them bread; or, if they had bread enough, should give them more gold to buy whatever would minister to their comfort, and pride; or one who, since they cared for wisdom, should tell them hidden things that they desired to know; or one who should take away the sting of a guilty conscience, and set

them at peace with any higher god whom they might have offended; or, better still, one who should cleanse their will, and strengthen their power to live a worthy life. But their hope, as we read of it, was simply in a king. The true King might indeed bestow all these benefits which we have been counting up; but that was not what came first to their minds. In hoping for a king, they hoped for one who would rule them, to whom they should do reverence, and whom, when the time came, they should obey. They felt that the first of all needs for themselves and for the whole distracted world was to be governed, to be bound together in a common work appointed by a common ruling head.

¶ Man is always seeking a king, for he feels in the depths of his being that he is never so great as in the presence of his greater. Let a great man appear in the world, and smaller men spontaneously rally round him; for they feel they are never so great as in the presence of their greater, never so noble as in doing the work of obedience. "He that is great among you, let him be the servant of all." That is an axiom engraved within us before Christ formulated it into words and committed it to the pages of inspiration. Mankind desire a king—one whose behests they deem it all honour to obey, and in whose presence they think it exaltation to bow. On what other principle can we account for the terrible despotisms that have crushed the world? How were they possible, a few tyrannizing over millions? They were possible only on one condition—that they were a response, or the semblance of one, to a deep craving implanted in our nature by the Creator. "Where is he that is born King?" The vast empires were only answers to the question—false ones if you like, but answers nevertheless—and the poor distracted heart of humanity deemed any answer better than none at all.[1]

¶ As the magi seek a Redeemer, so Herod fears a successor. If His birth as an infant makes proud kings tremble, what will His tribunal as a judge do?[2]

3. They sought one who was *born* king of the Jews. How they supposed at that time that this could be we know not; many thoughts were doubtless possible then which do not occur to us now. But the word assuredly meant at least thus much, that the expected king was not one raised to his throne by his own right

[1] J. C. Jones, *Studies in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 44.
[2] St. Augustine.

hand, or by the voice of men, for his strength or courage or wisdom or riches, but one carrying a Divine title from his birth. That king was not to be a Saul, not even a David, but a David's son. There was another king in the land already, Herod the king, as the Bible calls him, a powerful ruler, cruel and unscrupulous, but magnificent in his doings—the very ruler to draw to him men of the East with the charm of awe. He was no true Jew, much less of David's line; there was nothing in him of the true Jew's heart, which was David's heart. Many of his own subjects might be dazzled by the one who promised to make them strong with earthly strength, because they were indifferent to his readiness to profane all that their fathers had kept holy. But to the wise men he could never be what they sought. They took no sort of account of him as they entered Jerusalem, asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

4. Again, it was a king of the Jews that they looked for. How was this? They were not Jews themselves; they were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. Yet there was much in that strange nation, so full as it seemed of undying life, again and again buffeted and crushed, but not yet destroyed, worshipping one unseen God at one holy place with psalm and sacrifice, which might well persuade men of the East that a wondrous future was in store for Israel and the ruler of Israel. This was not the first time that Gentile witness had been borne to the Divine mission of the Jewish people; twice, at two great moments of the history, a voice from the world without had done homage to the holy race. Before the Promised Land was entered, Balaam the prophet of Moab had confessed the new power that was growing in the East: "God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies"; "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Once again, the second birth of the people out of their long captivity was helped and blessed by a king of the Gentile East, when Cyrus proclaimed that the Lord God of heaven had charged him to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and sent forth the summons, "Who

is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up."

¶ The Messianic hope of the last half-century before Christ was the hope of a King, and the Psalms of Solomon see in the coming reign of Messiah the salvation of Israel: "Raise up unto them their King, the son of David . . . and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy, and their King is the Lord Messiah." The charge laid against Jesus before the procurator was that, acting on these expectations, He had made Himself a king, and thus posed as a rival of Cæsar. As a matter of fact, He had withdrawn from the multitudes when they would have forced Him into that false position. Yet before Pilate He did not deny His kingly character, only affirming, "My kingdom is not of this world, or not from hence." The title on the cross, therefore, though inexact, was not radically untrue; a king lay dying there, though not one who was in any exclusive or earthly sense "the King of the Jews." The penitent robber came nearer to the truth when he said, "Jesus, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom." It was borne in upon his mind that in some mysterious way the Kingdom was to be reached through the cross, and lay beyond it; and his words almost echo the Lord's description of Himself as about to go "into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."[1]

II.

Following a Star.

1. "We saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." While in the East they saw the star of the King of the Jews. They saw, probably, at first, one of the fixed stars, to which they were led, in the course of their inquiry, to attach this specific value; and as it shone out on them night by night over their western horizon, they determined to walk in the direction from which it shone, or, as we should say, to follow it. They followed it, accordingly, day by day; night by night they gazed wistfully at it, and then rose to follow it again; they gazed and followed, and so they crossed the desert and reached the city to which even the heathen East had learned to ascribe an exceptional sanctity. And as their coming became known at gatherings of the priesthood, and in the palace of the king, they learned how an

[1] H. B. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, 17.

ancient prophecy had ruled that He whom they sought would be born in Bethlehem.

¶ Many a starry night I have followed a road leading due south, and over the road hung Betelgeux of Capella (westering with the others), and as I walked the star "went before me," and when I stopped it "stood" over farmstead or cottage. It was no strain of imagination to say that the star led me on; on the contrary, the optical illusion was so strong that while one was in motion one could scarcely help thinking of the star as advancing just as I myself advanced.[1]

¶ What sort of a star was it which they tell us started them on their journey? Not a planet, clearly, nor a conjunction of planets, as Kepler first suggested; for the planets were malign for the Magi. It seems most natural to think of a Nova, one of those sudden apparitions that tell us of a stupendous outburst in the depths of space, bringing to our eyes a new star that in a few weeks or months fades away from sight. We remember the Nova in Perseus which in February 1901 added a brief unit to the small company of our first-magnitude stars. But the Star of the Magi need not have been as bright as this. Professional astrologers would notice a new star which had no chance of observation by amateurs; and whether it was a Nova or not, the place of the star would probably count for more with them than its brilliance. My preference for the postulate of a Nova comes from the naturalness of their quest for an identification of the Fravashi they would associate with it. They had no doubt met with numerous Jews in their own country, and had knowledge of their Messianic hopes, which may even have struck them with their resemblance to their own expectation of Saoshyant. A dream which would supply the sought-for identification is all that is needed to satisfy the demands of the narrative. Their five miles' walk due south from Jerusalem gave time for the star, if seen low down in the sky in S.S.E. when they started, to be culminating just over Bethlehem when they drew near to the town; and men so deeply convinced of the significance of stellar motions would of course welcome this as fresh evidence that the end of their quest was gained.[2]

2. The star which might lead to the cradle of the Divine Infant shines at some time into every human conscience. God endows us all, without exception, with the sense and perception

[1] W. Canton, in *The Expositor*, 5th Ser., ix. 471.
[2] J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 283.

of a distinction and a law; the distinction between right and wrong, whatever right and wrong may be; and the law of obedience to right, when once it is discovered. And if a man makes the most of this endowment, instead of shunning or scorning it or doing it violence; if he allows himself to reflect that such inward legislation implies a Lawgiver, and to search for other traces of His presence and action; then, assuredly, is he on the way to learn more.

¶ The work of the inner light is that of judgment. It leads us to distinguish between right and wrong, and continues to lead us according as we are faithful to the light already given. We must act on these judgments. If certain things are seen, in the light, to be wrong, we must be faithful and put them on one side. Further, the light is a universal light. It informs us of truths—truths of faith and truths of conduct which are valid for all men. If we either refuse to obey the particular disclosures of truth given to us, or if we regard them as purely private matters, we do, in effect, deny the light, and fail to recognize its true character. It is useless to profess to believe in the inner light in general, and then to refuse to accept and follow the findings of the enlightened conscience.[1]

¶ There is a light which flashes and is gone, and yet survives. There is a light which eludes, but never deceives. There is a light which guides as it flies. There is a light which comes only to those who seek in the night, and can feel after what they cannot find, and can still nurse "the unconquerable hope," and can never lose heart. There is a light which is for ever in motion, and can be retained only by moving with it. There is a light which is always just ahead of where you stand. You must follow if you would arrive; and the following must never cease. He, the grey magician, has done but this one thing faithfully from end to end of the long years. "I am Merlin, who follow the gleam." His whole character, his whole secret, lies in that from the first days when

> In early summers,
> Over the mountain,
> On human faces,
> And all around me,
> Moving to melody,
> Floated The Gleam,

down to the end, when

[1] H. G. Wood, *George Fox*, 115.

I can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven,
Hovers The Gleam.

Therefore:

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it—
Follow The Gleam.[1]

III.

Finding a Child.

The star led the wise men to the cradle at Bethlehem, and "stood over the place where the young child was." The pilgrims entered and were satisfied.

1. They sought a king, and found a child. There is something very remarkable in the fact that they came from the distant East, and after all their sojourning and seeking found only a Child. Yet it was worth all their toil and trouble to learn the hard but precious lesson that true greatness consists in childlikeness. The world all the ages through had been growing away from the Child; its notions of greatness lay quite at the opposite pole. The Evil Spirit in his interview with our first parents succeeded in confusing the mind of the world relative to this point, and in putting the case altogether on a false issue. "Ye shall be as gods," said he, "knowing good and evil." He put likeness to God to lie in

[1] H. S. Holland, *Vital Values*, 24.

knowledge; and the whole drift of the Divine education of the race has been to counteract that notion, and to teach us that it consists neither in knowledge nor in power, but in childlikeness. As we review the history of the world, we see it dividing itself into three stages. In the first, Power is magnified, Force is deified. The great man is the strong man. In that era Nimrod is the hero after the world's heart; strength receives the homage of men. In the second stage Power is pushed back a step or two, and Intellect comes to the front. The great man is the intellectual man. In that era Homer is the favoured idol before whom the people delight to bow; genius receives the homage of men. But Christianity has inaugurated a new period; it points the world not to Nimrod or to Homer, but to a Child—not to Power or to Genius, but to Goodness. The great man of the future will be the good man.

¶ I remember a time, when, if any one mentioned the names of Napoleon Buonaparte or the Duke of Wellington, my heart responded in admiration, and I wished to become a soldier. I remember a time after that when, if you mentioned the names of Shakespeare or Milton, my heart responded in admiration, and I wished to be a poet. Yes; I have had my heroes, and I have worshipped them devoutly. But, were I to tell you my experience to-day, it is this—I have lost a great deal of my respect for power; I have lost a great deal of my admiration for genius; the supreme desire of my heart to-day is that I may be a good man, a childlike man, one whose life and character will mirror the Divinity. The great man of the future will be the good man. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."[1]

¶ The Russian peasantry have a curious tradition. It is that an old woman, the Baboushka, was at work in her house when the wise men from the East passed on their way to find the Christ Child. "Come with us," they said, "we have seen His star in the East, and go to worship Him." "I will come, but not now," she answered; "I have my house to set in order; when that is done, I will follow, and find Him." But when her work was done, the three kings had passed on their way across the desert, and the star shone no more in the darkened heavens. She never saw the Christ Child, but she is living, and searching for Him still. For His sake, she takes care of all His children. It is she who in Russian homes is believed to fill the stockings and dress the tree on Christmas morn. The children are awakened with the cry,

[1] J. C. Jones, *Studies in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 46.

"Behold the Baboushka," and spring up, hoping to see her before she vanishes out of the window. She fancies, the tradition goes, that in each poor little one whom she warms and feeds, she may find the Christ Child whom she neglected ages ago; but she is doomed to eternal disappointment.

2. They fell down and worshipped Him. No journey, although conducted with faith in the guide, will be successful unless it be sanctified by this bowing down of soul and body. And such worship as this was natural to the Gentile mind. It had been abused by it doubtless for idolatrous purposes, but the very bowing down to stocks and stones, being a corruption of true worship, indicates what the universal tradition was before it was so diverted. And this is implied in the second commandment, "Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them." For as every commandment commands the contrary of what it forbids, so we understand that the commandment is not fulfilled by merely not bowing down to idols, unless we also bow down and worship God. And hence Gentile Christianity began with this idea of worship.

¶ Wise men from afar are still seeking that cradle. All the great religions of the earth are really feeling for Christ. The consummation of all deep thought and aspiration is in Him. And, although often unknowingly, all the sovereign thinkers do Him reverence. The greatest of men have in successive generations made that cradle the shrine of their sincerest worship. In the corn-fields the heaviest heads bow most, and the mightiest intellects have done the Master lowliest reverence. All the ground is strewn with the tokens of their homage—sublime poems, harps and organs, deep philosophies, eloquent orations, rich sculpture, delightful pictures, magnificent architecture, dedicated to His praise and glory. Genius brings its choicest products to His feet, and thinks them poor.[1]

¶ Have you noticed that the three Wise Men are represented in art as men of different ages? One is old, one is middle-aged, and one is young. And the reason why they are so represented is because of a tradition which came from the lips of that great traveller Marco Polo. He recounts that when he got to Persia he made every effort to find out more about the Wise Men. He was shown their tomb, but that did not satisfy him. He wanted to hear something more about them, and he could not find any one who could give him any information. At last in his travels he

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

came to a little town which rejoiced in the name of Cala Ataperistan, or the town where they worshipped fire, and he inquired the reason of its name. They told him it was because it was from that town that three men—three Kings—had started to worship some great Being who was born in the West, and whose star they had followed. He goes on to say that of these three men one was old, one middle-aged, and one young, and they followed the star, taking with them their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh; gold to give to the great Being if He should turn out to be a king; frankincense to offer if the great Being should have something of the Deity about Him; myrrh if He were a physician. And when they came to the stable of Bethlehem they went in one at a time. First went in the old man, and instead of finding what he expected, he found an old man who talked with him. He left and was followed by the man of middle-age. He in his turn entered and was met by a Teacher of his own years who spoke with him. When the young man entered he in his turn found a young Prophet. Then the three met together outside the stable and marvelled—How was it that all three had gone in to worship this Being who was just born, and they had found not a child but three men of different ages? The old man had found the old, the middle-aged the middle-aged, and the young the young. And so taking their gifts they go in all together, and are amazed to discover that the Prophet is then a baby of twelve days old! Each separately sees in Christ the reflection of his own condition, the old man sees the old, the middle-aged the middle-aged, and the young the young: but when they go in all together they see Christ as He is. We shall all find in Christ the answer to our needs.[1]

3. The sincerity of their worship was proved by their gifts—"gold and frankincense and myrrh." We know what gold is, but the other gifts are unfamiliar in our day. Frankincense was an aromatic resin, used for perfume and also in the sacrifices. Myrrh was a highly-prized article of commerce, and, like frankincense, was an odorous gum. All these gifts represented value. We do not know the financial ability of these men, but it is safe to say that their offerings adequately represented their means. More significant than the seen was the unseen offering that they made. In the lowly house they bowed themselves before the Child and worshipped Him. Not content with bringing their rare gifts of valuable substances, they gave themselves.

[1] W. Gascoyne Cecil, in *The Church Family Newspaper*, Jan. 20, 1911, p. 48.

¶ The old Mediæval interpretation of the offered gold as signifying recognition of His kingship, the frankincense of His deity, and the myrrh of His death, is so beautiful that one would fain wish it true. But it cannot pretend to be more than a fancy. We are on surer ground when we see in the gifts the choicest products of the land of the Magi, and learn the lesson that the true recognition of Christ will ever be attended by the spontaneous surrender to Him of our best.[1]

¶ I suppose that the gold and frankincense and myrrh which the Eastern sages brought, represented the most valued treasures of each which they hastened to lay before the feet of the infant Christ. Even so, the heathen nations will all have their contribution to bring. The Indian will bring his mysticism and his deeply religious nature; the Chinese his patience and endurance and contentment; the Japanese his sense of discipline and chivalry; the Buddhist his kindliness and lofty ideals; the Mohammedan his strong sense of the oneness of God and his faith and resignation. The Christian Church as it is at present needs all these elements.[2]

¶ Gold would be always a suitable present. Frankincense and myrrh would be used chiefly in the houses of the great, and in holy places. They were prized for the delicious fragrance which they suffused. They were gifts fit to be presented to monarchs; and it was to Jesus, as a royal child, that they were presented by the Magi. The fathers of the Church thought that they could detect mysteries in the peculiar nature of the gifts. In the gold, says Origen, there is a reference to the Lord's royalty; the frankincense has reference to His Divinity; the myrrh to His decease. The number of the gifts was also a fertile source of cabalistic ingenuity to the older expositors. It symbolized the Trinity; it symbolized the triplicity of elements in the Saviour's personality; it symbolized the triad of the Christian graces, faith, hope, charity, etc. etc. But such a method of expounding is to turn the simple and sublime solemnities of Scripture into things ludicrous and grotesque. It is of moment to note that the visit of the Magi, and their reverential obeisance, and their gifts, must have had a finely confirming influence upon the faith of Joseph in reference to the perfect purity of Mary and the lofty character and destiny of her Offspring.[3]

[1] A. Maclaren. [2] H. N. Grimley. [3] James Morison.

The Two Baptisms.

LITERATURE.

Carroll (B. H.), *Sermons*, 315.
Davies (D.), *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, v. 277.
Harper (F.), *A Year with Christ*, 134.
Ingram (A. F. W.), *Into the Fighting Line*, 77.
Jowett (J. H.), *Apostolic Optimism*, 209.
Maclaren (A.), *Sermons Preached in Manchester*, ii. 227.
„ „ *The Victor's Crowns*, 207.
Martin (A.), *Winning the Soul*, 81.
Moore (E. W.), *The Christ-Controlled Life*, 39.
Parker (J.), *Studies in Texts*, v. 183.
Robinson (W. V.), *Angel Voices*, 28.
Simpson (W. J. S.), *The Prophet of the Highest*, 110.
Wilberforce (B.), *The Secret of a Quiet Mind*, 114.
Children's Pulpit: Fourth Sunday in Advent, i. 262 (A. M. Cawthorne).
Church Pulpit Year Book, 1906, p. 156.
Expository Times, xxv. 306 (J. Reid).
Preacher's Magazine, xii. 326 (A. Tucker).

The Two Baptisms.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.—Matt. iii. 11.

This text is a contrast between two baptizers, John and Jesus. Jesus is mightier than John, in the purity of His character, by so much as an immaculate one is superior to a sinful one; in the power which He holds, in so much as omnipotence transcends temporary, limited, and derived power; in the dignity of His character and of His office, by so much as all authority in heaven and on earth surpasses a brief earthly commission; and in His ministry, inasmuch as one was to decrease and cease and the other to increase and endure "alway, even unto the end of the world." There stood the two baptizers; and of the one it is said that he was as great as any man ever born of a woman. Hence it is not instituting a comparison between an insignificant man on the one hand and a greater man on the other, but it is instituting a comparison between the greatest man and a Being infinitely greater than the greatest man.

I.

The baptism of John was merely preparatory and negative. "I indeed baptize you with water." There is something extremely beautiful and pathetic in John the Baptist's clear discernment of his limitations, and of the imperfection of his work. His immovable humility is all the more striking because it stands side by side with as immovable a courage in confronting evil-doers, whether of low or of high degree. To him to efface himself and be lost in the light of Christ was no trial; it brought joy like that of the friend of the Bridegroom. He saw that the spiritual deadness and moral corruption of his generation was

such that a crash must come. The axe was "laid at the root of the trees," and there was impending a mighty hewing and a fierce conflagration. There are periods when the only thing to be done with the present order is to burn it.

But John saw, too, that there was a great deal more needed than he could give; and so, with a touch of sadness, he symbolized the incompleteness of his work in the words preceding the text, by reference to his baptism. He baptized with water, which cleansed the outside but did not go deeper. It was cold, negative. It brought no new impulses; and he recognized that something far other than it was wanted, and that He who was to come, before whom his whole spirit prostrated itself in joyful submission, was to bestow a holy fire which would cleanse in another fashion than water could do.

¶ The bounds of our habitation are fixed; so are our talents, so are our spheres of influence; so are our ranges of ministry. John knew exactly what he had to do, and he kept strictly within the Divine appointment. His was, indeed, an initial, or elementary, ministry, and yet God was pleased to make it a necessary part of His providential purpose. Men must work up to date, and people must be content to receive an up-to-date ministry, and their contentment need not be the less that they have an assurance that One mightier than the mightiest is coming with a deeper baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water,"—that is what every true teacher says, qualifying his utterance by the special environment within which his ministry is exercised. This is what is said by the schoolmaster: "I indeed baptize you with letters, alphabets, grammars; but there cometh one after me, mightier than I, who shall baptize you with the true intellectual fire." The schoolmaster can do but little for a scholar, yet that little may be all-important. The schoolmaster teaches the alphabet, but the spirit maketh alive. There is a literary instinct. There is a spirit which can penetrate through the letter into the very sanctuary of the spiritual meaning. The schoolmaster has an initial work; the literary spirit develops and completes what he could only begin.[1]

¶ John's perfect freedom from jealousy, leading to the frank and glad recognition of One who would supplant him through the greater fulness of His Divine gifts, seems to have been that which most impressed the Evangelist in the character of the Baptist.

[1] Joseph Parker.

It was this self-effacement, this entire devotion to the duty which God laid upon him, that gave the Baptist such truth of discernment. It was the single eye which gave light to his whole body, the simplicity and purity of heart which enabled him to see things as they really were. We are not disciples of John; but we should do well to honour and to imitate his noble simplicity, which so entirely subordinated self to the righteousness which he proclaimed. If we have any good cause at heart, we must unfeignedly rejoice when others are able to promote it more efficiently than we can do; otherwise we are loving ourselves more than the good cause. The same is true of every gift which we can legitimately prize; we must see with pleasure its higher manifestations in another, for otherwise we are prizing, not the gift, but the glory which it brings us. Though not formally a disciple of Jesus, John was a better Christian than most of us; for he had the simplicity of Christ, an entire forgetfulness of self in his devotion to God and goodness.[1]

Also of John a calling and a crying
Rang in Bethabara till strength was spent,
Cared not for counsel, stayed not for replying,
John had one message for the world, Repent.

John, than which man a sadder or a greater
Not till this day has been of woman born,
John like some iron peak by the Creator
Fired with the red glow of the rushing morn.

This when the sun shall rise and overcome it
Stands in his shining desolate and bare,
Yet not the less the inexorable summit
Flamed him his signal to the happier air.[2]

II.

A more effectual baptism was called for—a baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This would carry with it a deep and supernatural change. Fire is an element which has always affected the human mind with peculiar awe. It is in every way so strange and mysterious and, as it were, preternatural. Whether

[1] James Drummond, *Johannine Thoughts*, 26.
[2] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul*.

glowing on the hearth, or racing in forked darts across the heavens, or carrying all before it in a hurricane of flame, it is always weird and wonderful. And accordingly, from the first, man has felt towards it a fear and dread with which he does not regard any other force whatsoever in nature. In primitive times, as he saw it crawl out of the dry sticks he rubbed together and writhe about his fingers like a live thing, or was dazzled by the splendour of it in the midday sky, he even found a god in it and worshipped it; and where his religious conceptions have ceased to be so crude as this, he has nevertheless taken it as the most natural of all emblems under which to speak of the Divine. In the Old Testament itself every one will remember how very often fire is associated both with the real and with the visionary appearances of God to man. It is from the burning bush that Moses is commissioned to undertake the deliverance of the people. It is a pillar of fire (and cloud) that leads them through the wilderness. Long after, when rival worships have been set up in Israel, and the controversy between them is to be finally decided, it is by the falling of fire from heaven upon the faithful prophet's sacrifice that the people are constrained to cry, "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God." Later still, when the prophetic spark kindles the heart of an exile by the river Chebar he can find no better words in which to describe the Awful One who has appeared to him, than these: "Behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself." And, finally, in the New Testament, where, however, such language has at last become frankly metaphorical, you have such a statement as this: "Our God is a consuming fire." So closely has this unaccountable, uncontrollable, and everyway mysterious element associated itself in men's minds with the nature and operations of the Deity, that they have felt instinctively that existence furnished them with no more apt or suggestive figure under which to think and speak of Him.

When, therefore, it is said of Jesus that He "baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire," we see what is implied. It is implied that the influence He sheds around Him is something more than natural. The spiritual power He exerts, the inspiration He gives, the communication of inward life He makes is altogether different from the ordinary. It does not belong to the common sphere of

resources which are at the command, or of powers which are within the gift, of man. It is superhuman, supernatural, Divine.

¶ In course of a letter to Lady Welby, Bishop Westcott writes: "The full thought of God as Love and Fire on which you dwell is that which is able to bring hope and peace to us when we dare in faith to look at the world as it is. Again and again the marvellous succession rises: God is spirit—light—love: our God is a consuming fire."[1]

¶ Fire represents the Divine nature as it flames against sin to consume it (Heb. xii. 29). This is the fire of God's anger. But there is also the fire of His love. We may have the fire of sunshine, or the cheery fire of the hearth, or the fire which melts away the dross, as well as the fire of the conflagration which burns and destroys. It is this beneficent ministry of fire which symbolizes the Spirit of God. The emblem speaks to us of the Divine love kindled in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, the love that purifies and cleanses. The very same word is used (Acts ii. 33) to describe the outpouring of the Spirit which is employed (Rom. v. 5) to express His shedding abroad of love in our hearts: evidently the gift of the Spirit and of love are one and the same. As St. Augustine says: "The Spirit is Himself the love of God: and when He is given to a man He kindles in him the fire of love to God and his neighbour." So Charles Wesley speaks of the "flame of sacred love," and likens "all-victorious love" to the refining fire of the Holy Spirit. "The same idea is expressed by the common phrases of every language. We talk about the warmth of affection, the blaze of enthusiasm, the fire of emotion. Christians are to be set on fire of God"—that is, the celestial flame of love is to burn intensely in their hearts. The Spirit's baptism of fire is His baptism of love.[2]

III.

The baptism of fire searches and cleanses as water cannot do. There are some deeply established uncleannesses for which the action of water is not sufficiently stringent. In many cases of contagious disease, if we are to rid ourselves of every vestige of corruption, there are many things which must be burnt. The germs of the contagion cannot be washed away. They must be consumed away. Water would be altogether insufficient. We

[1] *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, ii. 72.
[2] J. H. Hodson, *Symbols of the Holy Spirit*, 35.

need fire. Fire is our most effective purifying minister, a powerful and relentless enemy of disease.

There can be no doubt that it was mainly this thought that was before the Baptist's mind when he spoke the words with which we are dealing. The symbol of his own work was water, and there is a great deal, in the way of cleansing, that water can do. It can remove the worst of the defilement to be seen anywhere, and make unsightly things fairly pleasing to look at. As he preached and pleaded with men his words had a certain, even striking, effect; the reformation that set in for the time being changed the face of society. But there are stains which no water can erase, inward impurities which it cannot reach. These must be burned out if they are to disappear. And this Jesus effects through His gift of the Holy Ghost. He breathes flame through men's hearts, and makes them pure.

¶ In 1665 London was in the grip of that terrible Plague, the horrors of which may still be felt through the pages of Defoe. The disease germs were hiding and breeding and multiplying everywhere. Every corner became a nest of contagion. Nothing could be found to displace it. In the following year the Great Fire broke out, and the plague-smitten city was possessed by the spirit of burning. London was literally baptized with fire, which sought out the most secret haunts of the contagion, and in the fiery baptism the evil genius of corruption gave place to the sweet and friendly genius of health. Fire accomplished quite easily what water would never have attained. And so in a comparison of fire and water as cleansing and redeeming agencies, common experience tells us that fire is the keener, the more searching, the more powerful, the more intense.[1]

¶ To me it seemed that God's most vehement utterances had been in flames of fire. The most tremendous lesson He ever gave to New York was in the conflagration of 1835; to Chicago in the conflagration of 1871; to Boston in the conflagration of 1872; to my own congregation in the fiery downfall of the Tabernacle at Brooklyn. Some saw in the flames that roared through its organ pipes a requiem, nothing but unmitigated disaster, while others of us heard the voice of God, as from heaven, sounding through the crackling thunder of that awful day, saying, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire"![2]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Apostolic Optimism*, 209.

[2] *The Autobiography of Dr. Talmage*, 231.

1. The fire has a refining power on true character. Partly by the fiery trials of human life, partly by the test of sore temptation, partly by the fire of disappointment, partly by the shattering of vain ideals and the scattering of earthly hopes, partly by all that sobers and deepens us, by the fire of bodily pain, by the fire of mental anguish, by every action of the Eternal Spirit of the living God, instructing, guiding, warning, rebuking, judging, haunting, condemning, up to the sorrows of death and beyond it; by all these each soul is tried in the baptism by fire whereby the good is refined and the evil destroyed.

The great glory of the gospel is to cleanse men's hearts by raising their temperature, making them pure because they are made warm; and that separates them from their evils. It is slow work to take mallet and chisel and try to chip off the rust, speck by speck, from a row of railings, or to punch the specks of iron ore out of the ironstone. Pitch the whole thing into the furnace, and the work will be done. So the true way for a man to be purged of his weaknesses, his meannesses, his passions, his lusts, his sins, is to submit himself to the cleansing fire of that Divine Spirit.

¶ Did you ever see a blast-furnace? How long would it take a man, think you, with hammer and chisel, or by chemical means, to get the bits of ore out from the stony matrix? But fling them into the great cylinder, and pile the fire and let the strong draught roar through the burning mass, and by evening you can run off a glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all the dross and rubbish is parted, which has been charmed out of all its sullen hardness, and will take the shape of any mould into which you like to run it. The fire has conquered, has melted, has purified. So with us. Love "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us," love that answers to Christ's, love that is fixed upon Him who is pure and separate from sinners, will purify us and sever us from our sins. Nothing else will. All other cleansing is superficial, like the water of John's baptism.[1]

¶ Beautiful colours, rich gold-work, exquisite designs, and artistic skill may be seen on the unfinished porcelain vase, but a careless touch may spoil them, there is a needs-be that the vase should be placed in the fire, that the artist's skill may be burnt in, and then the colours become permanent. The Holy Spirit is the Artist and the Fire. He alone can produce the beautiful

[1] A. Maclaren.

colours of a holy life and make the character impervious to the attacks of evil. He alone can make us resolve with Jonathan Edwards, who wrote in his diary these words: "If I believed that it were permitted to one man—and only one—in this generation to lead a life of complete consecration to God, I would live in every respect as though I believed myself to be that one."[1]

2. The fire will destroy everything that is not sterling metal. This is the alternative before every human being—either to be purified by the baptism of fire, or else to meet that central Holiness as a flame of judgment. Of course it must be so. For the holiness of God cannot change its character. It is man's heart that must be changed. To the obedient it is a savour of life unto life, to the evil a savour of death unto death; to the one remedial, to the other retributive. The Spirit of God must sanctify, or else it must destroy.

The gold is gold, and cannot be anything worse if it would. The chaff is worthless by nature, not by fault. The fire must of necessity purify the one and burn the other. Neither gold nor stubble can change. But that which is tested by the fire of the Divine Holiness is the will and the character of moral and responsible beings. Man can become pure as the gold or worthless as the stubble. From the same material issues the sinner and the saint. It must depend upon the soul itself whether the Divine Holiness shall be to it the fire which purifies or the fire which destroys. God cannot deny Himself, or be anything else than moral Perfection, or He would no longer be God. It is the creature that must change. The human will must change. The human will must so submit itself to the action of the grace of God that the evil shall be burnt out and the good refined. Our destiny is in our hands. The love and mercy which created us has no pleasure in our ruin. And if any soul hereafter meet that holiness of God in the form of unquenchable fire, it will be because that soul has refused to meet Him as the power which cleanses.

¶ The same pillar of fire which gladdened the ranks of Israel as they camped by the Red Sea shone baleful and terrible to the Egyptian hosts. The same Ark of the Covenant whose presence blessed the house of Obed-edom, and hallowed Zion, and saved

[1] F. E. Marsh, *Emblems of the Holy Spirit*, 122.

Jerusalem, smote the Philistines, and struck down their bestial gods. Christ and His gospel even here hurt the men whom they do not save.[1]

IV.

The baptism of fire imparts to the life an unmistakable glow and ardour and enthusiasm. This certainly is one very prominent trait in the life of Jesus Himself. The spirit of holiness in Him included a great zeal in the service of the Father. Once at least it blazed up even fiercely—when the desecration of the Temple had stung Him to the quick, and in wrath He overthrew the money-changers' tables and drove the offenders before Him. But it was not only in an instance so dramatic as this that "the zeal of his Father's house" was apparent in Him. It was the habit of His life and it appears all through. The holy enthusiasm—if we may use the word reverently of Him—in which He had given Himself at the first to the work that brought Him here never flagged during all the years He was engaged in it. Occasionally we see it manifesting itself in short-lived gleams of thankfulness at what has been accomplished for the Kingdom or of anticipation of its future triumph. Oftener it takes the form rather of a quiet, invincible, sustaining power that enables Him to hold on His way. It comforts His heart under the disappointments He meets with, strengthens Him under His heavy burden, and carries Him through all opposition; so that, because of His zeal for the truth and the kingdom and the glory of God, He did not fail nor was discouraged till He had set judgment in the earth.

What is greatly to be desired is that, in the lives of those who follow Jesus, there should be a large measure of the enthusiasm that glowed in His own—a serious, intelligent, glowing sympathy with God, a supreme thankfulness because of the purposes of grace He entertains towards our race, and a great readiness to spend and be spent in the carrying on of these so far as opportunity offers to every man. That is Christian enthusiasm—Christ's own enthusiasm, which He shares with all in whom His influence has free play. As for the forms it will take, they will be endless; for men are endlessly different, nor is there any need why any

[1] A. Maclaren.

man should violate his own nature in order to serve God faithfully. In the world there are all sorts of men and women, possessed of all sorts of temperaments and dispositions, and in the work of building up God's Kingdom on earth there is a place and a work for every one of them. What is imperative is that at the bottom of all our hearts there should be this deep, unchanging, burning desire to help that great work on for Jesus' sake.

¶ Suppose we saw an army sitting down before a granite fort, and they told us that they intended to batter it down: we might ask them, "How?" They point to a cannon-ball. Well, but there is no power in that; it is heavy, but if all the men in the army hurled it against the fort, they would make no impression. They say, "No; but look at the cannon." Well, there is no power in that. A child may ride upon it, a bird may perch in its mouth; it is a machine, and nothing more. "But look at the powder." Well, there is no power in that; a child may spill it, a sparrow may peck it. Yet this powerless powder and powerless ball are put into a powerless cannon; one spark of fire enters it —and then, in the twinkling of an eye, that powder is a flash of lightning, and that ball a thunderbolt, which smites as if it had been sent from heaven. So is it with our Church machinery at this day: we have all the instruments necessary for pulling down strongholds, and oh for the baptism of fire![1]

1. Passionate religious enthusiasm attaches itself to a person; and the more near and real our intercourse with the person, the more beautiful will be our holiness, and the more fiery-hearted will be our service and devotion. Just think for a moment what magnificent import this revelation in the Person of Jesus had for those Jews who became His disciples. The religion of the Jews had become an obedience to precept and law. The germ of their national faith is to be found in those ten laws which we call the Ten Commandments. But to these ten laws the Rabbis had made countless additional laws—petty, trying, and irritating laws, which had come to be regarded as of equal importance with the original ten. To the earnest Jew, the warm, loving purpose of God had become buried in a mountainous mass of man-made traditions. It was no longer God with whom the Jew was dealing, but this vast dead-weight of Rabbinical law. God had become to them an earth-born system, a burdensome "ism," a heavy and smothering

[1] William Arthur, *The Tongue of Fire*, 309.

tradition. Then came the Christ, and the first thing He did was to tear these miles of wrappages away.

Christ gives fervour by bringing the warmth of His own love to bear upon our hearts through the Spirit, and that kindles ours. Where His great work for men is believed and trusted in, there, and there only, is excited an intensity of consequent affection to Him which glows throughout the life. It is not enough to say that Christianity is singular among religious and moral systems in exalting fervour into a virtue. Its peculiarity lies deeper—in its method of producing that fervour. It is kindled by that Spirit using as His means the truth of the dying love of Christ. The secret of the gospel is not solved by saying that Christ excites love in our souls. The question yet remains—How? There is but one answer to that: He loved us to the death. That truth laid on hearts by the Spirit, who takes of Christ's and shows them to us, and that truth alone, makes fire burst from their coldness.

¶ In the times of the Crusaders a band of valiant knights traversed the sunny plains of France, to sail from Marseilles for the Holy Land. There, along with others who were bound on the same enterprise, they embarked on the stately vessel that was to carry them across the sea. But, eager as they were to do, day after day they lay helplessly becalmed. The hot sun beat upon them, and was flashed back from the unbroken surface of the waves. They lounged wearily upon the deck; they scanned the heavens in vain for the signs of an approaching breeze. It seemed as though some adverse fate resolved to hold them back. But in the stillness of an even tide, from a group of warriors assembled at the prow, there rose the swelling strains of the *Veni Creator Spiritus*—"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire." And straightway a breath came upon them from the dying sun; the smooth, shining surface of the sea was ruffled, the cordage rattled, the sails were filled, and the vessel sped joyously over the dancing waves. Whether the story is true or not, it contains a very grand truth. Without the Spirit of Love all is dark and dead.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
And lighten with celestial fire.

2. This enthusiasm needs nurture. There is a danger that the wide divergences of our interests in modern life diminish and impoverish the intensity of our devotion. How did our fathers keep the fire burning? There are some words found very

frequently in their letters, and diaries, and sermons, which awaken similar feelings to those aroused by types of extinct species that are sometimes unearthed from the deposits of a far-off and unfamiliar age. Here are two such words, "meditation" and "contemplation"—words which appear to suggest an unfamiliar day, when the world was young, and haste was not yet born, and men moved among their affairs with long and leisurely strides. Our fathers steeped their souls in meditation. They appointed long seasons for the contemplation of God in Christ. And as they mused the fire burned. Passion was born of thought. What passion? The passion which Faber so beautifully describes as the desire which purifies man and glorifies God:—

But none honours God like the thirst of desire,
Nor possesses the heart so completely with Him;
For it burns the world out with the swift ease of fire,
And fills life with good works till it runs o'er the brim.

¶ Let us muse upon the King in His beauty, let us commune with His loveliness, let us dwell more in the secret place, and the unspeakable glory of His countenance shall create within us that enthusiastic passion which shall be to us our baptism of fire, a fire in which everything unchristian shall be utterly consumed away.

Oh then wish more for God, burn more with desire,
Covet more the dear sight of His Marvellous Face;
Pray louder, pray longer, for the sweet gift of fire
To come down on thy heart with its whirlwinds of grace.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Apostolic Optimism*, 224.

A Question of Life.

LITERATURE.

Alford (H.), *Sermons*, i. 152.
Archibald (M. G.), *Sundays at the Royal Military College*, 73.
Brooks (P.), *The Spiritual Man*, 47.
Burgon (J. W.), in *The Expositor's Library*, i. 202.
Chapin (E. H.), *God's Requirements*, 173.
Conn (J.), *The Fulness of Time*, 117.
Eyton (R.), *The Temptation of Jesus*, 12.
Ford (H.), *Sermons with Analyses*, 93.
Gibbons (J. C.), *Discourses and Sermons*, 143.
Hitchcock (R. D.), *Eternal Atonement*, 169.
Jowett (J. H.), *Things that Matter Most*, 183.
Knight (G. H.), *Full Allegiance*, 83.
Lewis (F. W.), *The Master of Life*, 3.
M'Connell (S. D.), *Sons of God*, 203.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew i.–viii., 76.
Macmillan (H.), *Sun-Glints in the Wilderness*, 22.
Massillon (J. B.), *Sermons*, 242.
Momerie (A. W.), *The Origin of Evil*, 135.
Morgan (G. C.), *The Ten Commandments*, 6.
Mursell (W. A.), *Sermons on Special Occasions*, 233.
Plummer (A.), *Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 35.
Vaughan (C. J.), *The Two Great Temptations*, 113.
Vincent (M. R.), *God and Bread*, 3.
Welldon (J. E. C.), *The Spiritual Life*, 140.
Contemporary Pulpit, 2nd Ser., iii. 96 (H. Wace).

A Question of Life.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—Matt. iv. 4.

1. *The Temptation Story.*—Our Lord's temptation, next to His death and passion, is the greatest event recorded of Him in the Gospels. The reason of this is evident. It was the Messiah's first encounter with His great enemy, Satan. Viewed aright, the scene so simply and briefly described in Scripture is the most terrific that can be imagined, as well as the most sublime; for we cannot forget that it is none other than a contest, on the issue of which depended the salvation of all mankind. On the one side was the Eternal Son, made flesh; sinless indeed, yet compassed with all the infirmity of man's fallen nature: on the other, the chief of the fallen angels, Satan; that old serpent who, in the beginning by deceiving our first parents, had brought death and sin and sorrow into the world. Satan knows his rival, and yet he knows Him but partially. He strides out to meet Him in desperate duel, as Goliath did the stripling whom he despised; and both hosts pause and gaze.

(1) In all probability the temptation of our Lord followed immediately upon the baptism, for St. Mark uses the word "straightway," and St. Luke states that Jesus returned from Jordan full of the Spirit and was led by Him into the wilderness. It was, moreover, the natural counterpart of the baptism, which had ended with the declaration of the Divine Sonship of Jesus. From this the tempter takes his first occasion of evil suggestion, while Jesus takes the next step in the fulfilment of all righteousness by meeting the attacks of evil on the same footing as all men since the first temptation. That was the ordering of His Father in Heaven, to fit Him more perfectly for His work, by giving Him an experimental acquaintance with the force of our tempta-

tions day by day. But probably His own reason for going away from the crowds into a desert place was to have more undisturbed communion with His Father and to meditate upon the great work given Him to do. Yet into these holy hours the tempter came; and what He expected would be a time of calm and hallowed intercourse with Heaven was turned into a time of dire conflict with all the subtlety of hell.

(2) Our Lord was "in the wilderness alone"—in St. Mark's graphic description, "with the wild beasts." There were none but heavenly witnesses of the mysterious experiences of those forty days; no human eyes witnessed them; and their record, therefore, is due to no human observation. The ultimate source of information must have been our Lord Himself, as the most rigorous criticism admits. His disciples would not have been likely to think that He could be tempted to evil; and, if they had supposed that He could, they would have imagined quite different temptations for Him, as various legends of the saints show. The form, therefore, in which the temptations are described is probably our Lord's, chosen by Him as the best means of conveying the essential facts to the minds of His followers.

(3) It does not follow, because the temptations are described separately, that they took place separately, one ceasing before the next began. Temptations may be simultaneous or interlaced; and, in describing these three, Matthew and Luke are not agreed about the order. Nor does it follow, because the sphere of the temptation changes, that the locality in which Christ was at the moment was changed. We need not suppose that the devil had control over our Lord's Person and took Him through the air from place to place: he directs His thoughts to this or that. The change of scene is mental. From no high mountain could more than a small fraction of the world be seen; but the glory of all the kingdoms of the world could be suggested to the mind. Nor again do the words, "The tempter came and said unto him," imply that anything was seen by the eye or heard by the ear; any one might describe his own temptations in a similar way. What these words do imply is that the temptations came to Christ from the outside; they were not the result, as many of our temptations are, of previous sin.

2. *The First Temptation.*—The temptation was real. The mystery of His humanity—a humanity real in soul as in body—made Him capable of temptation; made temptation a conflict and a suffering; made victory a thing to be fought for—the victory not of an insensible, impassive Divinity, but of a manhood indwelt by the Spirit.

(1) For forty days and nights He had been alone in the wilderness. St. Mark and St. Luke inform us that during the whole of that time He was tempted of the devil; and the former perhaps indicates one method of temptation which may have been tried, in adding "and he was with the wild beasts." It may have been attempted by terror to shake the Redeemer's firmness of purpose. But of this Scripture leaves us in uncertainty; and it is not till the end of the forty days that we are permitted to witness the forms which His temptation assumed. At that time we find Him exhausted with His long abstinence from food.

He was hungry, grievously hungry. He was experiencing to the full extent that strong craving of our nature which sometimes turns men into brutes. His tongue was parched and blackened with the terrible heat of the wilderness. He was worn out with hunger. Every circumstance conspired to render the allurement of food as strong as possible. The pitiless blue, like brass above; the barren wilderness around Him, where roam the prowling beasts. Son of God? Did He look like the Son of God, without accompaniment of angel or of glory? Was it not a fancy and a dream?

(2) The wilderness in which He kept His lonely vigil for forty days, the hunger and exhaustion which He felt after His long fast and travail of soul, were all symbols and evidences of the curse of man. Satan came to Him while He was suffering from these effects of Adam's sin, and suggested to Him an easy method by which they might be removed. By a miracle, the curse would be neutralized and His wants supplied. The food which the wilderness like a miser refused could be wrung by force from its grasp. Faithful to the just and wise law of barrenness imposed upon it by God, it could be made conveniently disobedient by the arbitrary exercise of Divine power. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Use Thy Divine

power to procure comfort; choose a life of ease and abundance, instead of the bare hard stones of the wilderness.

(3) Jesus overcomes the solicitation of evil as a pious man and as a believing Israelite. His mind is saturated with the Bible, and a word of it which meets the case leaps instinctively to His tongue. The passage which Jesus quotes is from the Book of Deuteronomy, in which the spiritual lessons of the leadings of Israel as God's Son in the wilderness are drawn out. In Deut. viii. 1–3 the hunger suffered during forty years in the wilderness, and its relief by the gift of manna, was to teach the people that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The bearing of the words on Christ's hunger is twofold: first, He will not use His miraculous powers to provide food, for that would be to distrust God, and so to cast off His filial dependence; second, He will not separate Himself from His brethren and provide for Himself by a way not open to them, for that would really be to reverse the very purpose of His incarnation and to defeat His whole work.

I.

Life by Bread.

How shall we live? Multitudes of people are asking that question to-day with peculiar earnestness. The man who could give a satisfactory practical answer would be regarded as the greatest of all public benefactors. Sometimes a kindly providence apparently shapes all for a man at the moment of his birth. Not till some sudden calamity overwhelms him is he roused into a conscious necessity of deciding for himself what he will do and become. But to most men there comes early in life the occasion and the necessity for deliberation and decision. Towards what goal in the future, he then asks, shall I now direct my steps, and by what route and methods shall it be reached? To these questions he is forced to give some kind of answers.

1. *What is covered by the word "Bread"?*—Bread we call the staff of life. This familiar imagery is as ancient at least as the

time of Abraham. To the three angels, one of them the mysterious angel of the covenant, who appeared to him as he sat at the door of his tent in the plains of Mamre, the hospitable patriarch said, "I will fetch a morsel of bread, and stay ye your hearts." Moses, when he threatened the people with famine in punishment of their sins, described it as the breaking of their staff. Isaiah also warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah that the Lord of hosts will take away "the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water." Bread was what the famished Bedouin craved when he caught up so eagerly the bag he found lying by a fountain in the desert, and flung it down again so quickly in despair, exclaiming, "Alas! it is only diamonds."

But "bread," as we have it in the text, means more than this. It covers the whole visible economy of life—all that range of supplies, helps, and supports upon which men depend to keep themselves alive, and to make life comfortable and enjoyable. It covers the whole economy of food and drink, clothing, shelter, ministry to the senses, to power, respectability, and worldly honour. The world's commonly accepted theory is, *By these things we live. We cannot get on without them.*

¶ If it be urged that these views of Mr. Hinton [on sacrifice] are very uncomfortable views of life, I might suggest that Christianity itself, with its fundamental axiom, "He that loveth his life shall lose it," cannot strictly be defined as a comfortable religion. I would ask whether our modern worship of "the comfortable" has given us a life that really satisfies even the most worldly amongst us; whether, on the contrary, it has not bound down the free play and joyous movement of life under a "weight of custom, heavy as frost, deep almost as life," debarring us from the healthy joys of "plain living and high thinking," from the lofty enterprise and joyous heroism that "feeds the high tradition of the world," and from the deeper blessedness of sacrifice,

> That makes us large with utter loss
> To hold divinity?[1]

2. *The peril of "Bread."*—Possessed as we are of a physical nature, with its clamorous appetites and its innumerable bodily needs, we are tempted at times to believe that man is merely a superior kind of animal, living by bread alone, and with no interest

[1] Ellice Hopkins, *Life and Letters of James Hinton*, 293.

in anything save what he can see and touch and taste. On this view, man becomes and remains a mere instrument, in one way or another living only for bread, living only for an end out of himself, living merely in subservience to that class of things which bread represents. There is the great evil in this world, and there spring up temptations similar in character to those which assailed Christ in the wilderness.

(1) There is danger for the *individual.* In that first conception of himself as a responsible and solitary being, every young man meets the same devil as Jesus met. And the temptation is the same—the assurance given in some form or other that bread is all that a man needs, that everything else is a delusion, that to live a life of physical comfort is the only solid wish for a man's soul. Perhaps it is a business which he knows is wrong, but sees must be profitable. Perhaps it is the abandonment of those he ought to care for, so that he may himself get rich. Perhaps it is the hiding of his sincere convictions in order to keep his place in some social company. Perhaps it is connivance at a wicked man's sin in order to preserve his favour. Perhaps it is the postponing of charity to some future day when it shall be easier. Perhaps it is a refusal to acknowledge Christ, the Master, out of fear, or because some easy, foolish friendship would be sacrificed. Perhaps it is simply the giving up of ambitions, intellectual or spiritual, for the sake of quiet, unperturbed respectability. These are real struggles.

Now, manifestly, it must lead to the most disastrous results when the lower elements of a man's nature are treated as if they were the only, or at any rate the most important, elements. The soul of the sensualist is like a State in which the ignorant, vulgar and stupid mob has usurped the reins of government, and is proceeding to destroy everything better than itself. Enjoyment, which is the proper satisfaction for the sensuous part of our being, is no satisfaction at all for the mind and heart and spirit. The unsatisfactoriness of a life devoted to pleasure may be proved, not only by abstract considerations, but by the fact that those who have lived in this fashion invariably speak of their existence with disappointment and disgust.

¶ I have seen the silly rounds of business and pleasure and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of

the world and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. Their real value is very, very low; but those who have not experienced them always overrate them. For myself, I by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose.[1]

¶ In one of his *Hebrew Melodies* Byron speaks in a similar strain—

Fame, wisdom, love, and power were mine,
And health and youth possess'd me;
My goblets blush'd from every vine,
And lovely forms caress'd me;
I sunn'd my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
Of pleasure unembitter'd;
And not a trapping deck'd my power
That gall'd not while it glitter'd.

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath power of charming?
It will not list to wisdom's lore,
Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.

(2) There is a *national menace.* In these modern days one finds oneself rummaging the pages of Gibbon and Tacitus and Juvenal. Look at those old empires which lived by bread alone; by riches so enormous that it seems as if God had determined to give money a chance to do its best; living by power so vast that there were no more worlds to conquer; living by pleasure so prodigal and so refined and varied that the liveliest invention was exhausted, and the keenest appetite surfeited. Babylon, Rome, Antioch, Alex-

[1] Lord Chesterfield.

andria, Carthage,—to-day we dare not open to our children the records of the inner life of these communities. We almost hesitate to read its fearful summary in the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The old empires have gone down in ruin, and their pleasures have turned to a corruption which is an offence in the world's nostrils. The old city which rang with the cry of "Bread and the Circus!" is only a monument now. The tourist wanders over the Palatine, and peers down into the choked vaults of the Cæsars' palaces; and the antiquarian rummages where Nero's fish-ponds gleamed, and climbs along the broken tiers of the Coliseum, from which the culture and beauty and fashion of Rome looked down with delight upon Christian martyrs in the fangs of tigers.

Not in material progress then, nor in art and science, nor in the stoicism of absolute duty, is the law of human nature found to lie. We fall back upon the immemorial truth—"Man shall not live by bread alone."

¶ The most helpful and sacred work, which can at present be done for humanity, is to teach people (chiefly by example, as all best teaching must be done) not how "to better themselves," but how to "satisfy themselves." It is the curse of every evil nation and evil creature to eat, and *not* be satisfied. The words of blessing are, that they shall eat and be satisfied. And as there is only one kind of water which quenches all thirst, so there is only one kind of bread which satisfies all hunger—the bread of justice, or righteousness; which hungering after, men shall always be filled, that being the bread of heaven; but hungering after the bread, or wages, of unrighteousness, shall not be filled, that being the bread of Sodom.[1]

3. *Christ's attitude to "Bread."*—But the subject has another side. There are people who try to get rid altogether of the lower elements. They attempt to eradicate desire, to extinguish instinct, to suppress and annihilate the bodily nature. Principal Caird says, "If the spiritual self is essentially greater than the lower tendencies, why should it not exist without them? If desire and passion drag me down from my ideal life, why should I not escape from their thraldom, and live as if I were a disembodied spirit? Snap the ties that bind me to the satisfactions of

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, v. (*Works*, vii. 426).

the moment, that absorb me in the transient and perishable, and will not my spirit gain at a bound its proper sphere? But," he answers, "the ties cannot be snapped, and even if they could, the end proposed would not be gained. The violent self-suppression at which the ascetic aims can never be effected; and if it could, it would be, not the fulfilment, but the extinction, of a moral life. In our self-development the lower natural tendencies have an indispensable part to play. Apart from them, the realization of our ideal nature would be utterly impossible." In the life of our Lord we find no encouragement for this ascetic theory. "The Son of man came eating and drinking." Very precious to Christian hearts are those brief, those thrilling records which make Him like unto us, one with us, in all things: Jesus wept. Jesus was wearied with His journey. Jesus said, I thirst. Jesus was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. He afterward hungered. The Maker of our bodies never speaks scornfully of their normal, innocent necessities. Human life, in the lowest sphere of its merely animal functions and wants, is invested with a sort of sacredness as the workmanship and husbandry of God.

¶ How utterly opposed to the thought of Jesus Christ is all asceticism, all religious isolation and retreat from the world. Society, not solitude, is the natural home of Christianity. The Christian is not to flee from the contagion of evil, but to meet it with the contact of health and holiness. The Church is not to be built on glass posts for moral insulation, but among the homes of common men for moral transformation. What use is a light under a bushel? It must shine where there is darkness. The place of need is the field of duty, and though we are not to be of the world, we are to be first and last in the world and for the world.[1]

¶ In a letter to the Rev. W. P. Wood, who was thinking of introducing some criticism of Benthamism into his Oxford Sermons, Dean Hook wrote: "If you have had time to look into Bentham's work you will find that he assumes that there are only three principles of action, (1) asceticism, (2) sympathy, (3) utility. There is a misplaced attempt at facetiousness involving a gross misstatement of the first of these principles at the outset of the book; for it is a bad introduction to a work professing strict philosophy to lay down that the principle of asceticism consists in supposing the 'misery of His creatures to be gratifying to the

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 42.

Creator.' The principle, though carried to an excess, was in itself good and true, namely, the subduing of sensual appetites as a means of freeing the mind from their bias. Like every other device of man, this principle failed with the monks as it had failed with the Stoics, and I think that on inquiry it would be found the radical vice of the system was its leading men to dwell too exclusively on *self*, by which in the first place pride, and in the next indifference to the happiness of others, became gradually engendered in the ascetic."[1]

II.

Life by the Word of God.

When Christ says that men shall *live* by God's word, He means by "life" far more than the little span of years, with their eating and drinking and pleasure and gain-getting. This utterance of the world's Redeemer assumes the fact of immortality. If not, the theory of life by God is condemned; and there is nothing for us but the bread-theory: "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." To live by the word of God is to share the eternal life of God. The bread-life is but the prelude and faint type of this.

1. The first point to be attained by man is to rise to the true conception of life. When he does this he has a different standard of value from that of the mere bread standard. The standard of value with him is whatever elevates and perfects his personality; not what he gets, not what he accumulates, not what feeds only one part of his nature, but what makes him great and good, strong and beautiful, and assimilates him to God and Christ. He values everything that comes from the mouth of God, and lives by it—that is, all things that God gives, not merely to the body, but to the soul.

Every word of God contains a revelation and a commandment. Whenever God speaks by any of His voices, it is first to tell us some truth which we did not know before, and second to bid us do something which we have not been doing. Every word of God includes these two. Truth and duty are always wedded. There is no truth which has not its corresponding duty. And there is no duty which has not its corresponding truth. We are

[1] W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook*, i. 246.

always separating them. We are always trying to learn truths, as if there were no duties belonging to them, as if the knowing of them would make no difference in the way we lived. That is the reason why our hold on the truths we learn is so weak. And we are always trying to do duties as if there were no truths behind them; that is, as if they were mere arbitrary things which rested on no principles and had no intelligible reasons. That is why we do our duties so superficially and unreliably. When every truth is rounded into its duty, and every duty is deepened into its truth, then we shall have a clearness and consistency and permanence of moral life which we hardly dream of now.

¶ The rule and measure of duty is not utility, nor experience, nor the happiness of the greatest number, nor State convenience, nor fitness, order, and the *pulchrum*. Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from Him who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal vicar of Christ, a prophet in its informations, a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas; and even though the eternal priesthood throughout the Church could cease to be, in it the sacerdotal principle would remain, and would have a sway.[1]

2. Man cannot be satisfied with bread, with anything material —he cannot live upon it; there are portions of his nature which it will not nourish, cravings which it will not satisfy. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If man is to *live*, he must satisfy the deeper cravings first. This is shown both in consciousness and in experience.

(1) *The appeal to consciousness.*—Man discovers within himself certain powers—powers of work, powers of study, powers of sacrifice, powers of suffering for others; what is to become of these powers if he lives by bread alone, if he makes material comfort his one and only object? Undoubtedly they will dwindle and decay. We know that we have a reason and a conscience which ought to be our guide; and we are all conscious, at least at times, of feelings, wishes, aspirations which material things can never satisfy. We all feel that we are capable of and meant

[1] Cardinal Newman.

for a higher and nobler life than that of an animal: even for a life guided by reason and conscience, a life of faith, love, righteousness, holiness, a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice for our own good and for the good of our brethren; and we all somehow or other have a belief that no life can be at its best or worthiest which is not after this pattern.

(2) *The appeal to experience.*—Again by a survey of human history we find that other men, in other days, have lived not for the flesh, but for the Spirit. The testimony of devout men at many times and in many regions of the earth to the capacity of the human spirit for communion with the Divine Spirit, which is the very breath of the Godhead, is as sure and strong as any testimony to any essential fact of human nature. Their history confirms man in his study of himself. He reads his duty in their stories. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."

¶ A second man I honour, and still more highly [than the toilworn Craftsman]: Him who is seen toiling for the spirituality indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one: when we can name him Artist: not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality?—these two, in all their degrees, I honour; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth. Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendour of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of Earth, like a light shining in great darkness.[1]

3. To live this higher life is to be obedient to the word of God. Jesus, the author of Christian faith, lived from beginning to end, without deviation or exception, by the words proceeding

[1] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. iii. chap. iv.

from the mouth of God. In His passion-baptism He bore the penalty of the disobedience of the race, and in His resurrection He took again His life, that He might communicate it to sinful men, that in its energy they also might obey the law of God. He conquered at the last, as He conquered at the first, by obeying every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God; overcame by His human faith and obedience, and not by His Divine power; made Himself known in His highest glory to men, not by exempting Himself from the lot of humanity, but through a fellowship with their miseries.

(1) *Obedience is the secret of manhood.*—The supreme duty of every man is that he should discover and obey these words. If he live from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and from year to year without reference to that law, hoping that, after being regardless of, if not rebellious against, it, he will at last slip into some happy state, then surely he must indeed be blind and foolish. Self-control and a willing humiliation of self to the Will that rules the universe is man's first and hardest lesson. This teaches him at the outset how helpless and hopeless he is in himself. Such knowledge drives a man out of himself hungry and thirsty for every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. When once he has learned to lay hold of the Power which alone can help him, then begins the process which ends in the mastery of self and in the consummation of a life which alone is worth living.

¶ How is the soul free? Not, as has been excellently put, "when it is at the mercy of every random impulse, but when it is acted upon by congenial forces, when it is exposed to spiritual pressure, to constraint within itself." Let us take a concrete instance. Take a high-souled man who is injured or insulted by his fellow. How will he act? What will be here the next thing? The natural reaction, the instinctive movement, will be one of revolt, of paying back in like coin. That lies nearest to the animal in him, and he feels it all. But will it determine his action? Will that actually come next? There is a beautiful story which D'Aguesseau, a French Advocate-General of the seventeenth century, tells of his father: "Naturally of a quick temper," his son says of him, "when under provocation one saw him redden and become silent at the same moment; the nobler part of his soul allowing the first fire to pass without word said,

in order to re-establish straightway that inner calm and tranquillity which reason and religion had combined to make the habit of his soul." There you have the thing taken from the life; the trained soul caught in the entire fineness of its action. The whole philosophy of the spirit is there; the higher nature constructing its next thing, not from the grosser impulses, but from the free obedience it pays to the highest that is in it.[1]

(2) *Obedience is the proof of sonship.*—It was by His obedience to the word of God that Christ proved His Sonship. As there is no doubt, neither is there any wavering in His decision. The life of man is the life of obedience to God. He has bidden me be His son here. The life of a son is the life of obedience, and He has bidden me prove that the life of sonship and the life of man are one, and that I must prove. My sonship—not by claim from the heavens; not by being exalted with twelve legions of angels; not with flare of trumpet—I must prove my sonship through obedience. I must prove my sonship by working out the will and carrying out the word of my Father. There is a long, long, fierce struggle before the man who says he will not live by bread alone. But by obedience to the word of God the victory will ultimately be ours, and our title, "sons of God," be approved.

¶ You must yield yourselves to be led along by the Spirit, with that leading which is sure to conduct you always away from self and into the will of God. You must welcome the Indweller to have His holy way with your springs of thought and will. So, and only so, will you truly answer the idea, the description, "sons of God"—that glorious term, never to be *satisfied* by the relation of mere creaturehood, or by that of merely exterior sanctification, mere membership in a community of men, though it be the Visible Church itself. But if you so meet sin by the Spirit, if you are so led by the Spirit, you do show yourselves nothing less than God's own sons. He has called you to nothing lower than sonship; to vital connexion with a Divine Father's life, and to the eternal embraces of His love. For when He gave and you received the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise, who reveals Christ and joins you to Him, what did that Spirit do, in His heavenly operation? Did He lead you back to the old position, in which you shrunk from God, as from a Master who bound you against your will? No, He showed you that in the Only Son you are nothing less than sons, welcomed into the inmost home of eternal life and love.[2]

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-Day*, 143.

[2] H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 223.

¶ Francis had conquered, one by one, his love of company, of fine clothes, of rank and wealth; his aversion to squalor, disease, and misery; his daintiness in food and surroundings. All were laid upon the altar of obedience, and for all God gave him a thousandfold of their antitypes in the spiritual life—for parents and friends, His own continual presence; for rank, sonship of the King of kings; for garments, the robe of righteousness; for wealth, "all things"; for personal fastidiousness, a purity, tenderness, and joy which lifted him above the annoyances of daily experience. The weapons marked with the cross were gaining him the victory. His vision was in course of fulfilment.[1]

[1] A. M. Stoddart, *Francis of Assisi*, 91.

The First Beatitude.

LITERATURE.

Ainsworth (P. C.), *The Blessed Life*, 61.
Brett (J.), *The Blessed Life*, 7.
Callan (H.), *Heart Cures*, 18, 27.
Carpenter (W. B.), *The Great Charter of Christ*, 77.
Charles (Mrs. R.), *The Beatitudes*, 21.
Deshon (G.), *Sermons for the Ecclesiastical Year*, 484.
Dudden (F. H.), *Christ and Christ's Religion*, 47.
Dykes (J. O.), *The Manifesto of the King*, 25.
Eyton (R.), *The Beatitudes*, 14.
Fletcher (A. E.), *The Sermon on the Mount and Practical Politics*, 1.
Fox (W. J.), *Collected Works*, iii. 210.
Gore (C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 23.
Hambleton (J.), *The Beatitudes*, 32.
Ingram (A. F. W.), *Secrets of Strength*, 14.
Iverach (J.), *The Other Side of Greatness*, 1.
Jones (J. D.), *The Way into the Kingdom*, 23.
Laverack (F. J.), *These Sayings of Mine*, 19.
Leckie (J.), *Life and Religion*, 209.
Maclaren (A.), *The Beatitudes*, 1.
Meyer (F. B.), *Blessed are Ye*, 22.
Miller (J. R.), *The Master's Blesseds*, 23.
Moberley (G.), *Sermons on the Beatitudes*, 1.
Monsell (J. S. B.), *The Beatitudes*, 1.
Pearson (A.), *Christus Magister*, 51.
Potts (A. W.), *School Sermons*, 64.
Ridgeway (C. J.), *The Mountain of Blessedness*, 12.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, lv. (1909), No. 3156.
Vaughan (J.), *Sermons* (Brighton Pulpit), New Ser., xxi. (1882), No. 1197.
Wilmot-Buxton (H. J.), *Day by Day Duty*, 172.
Woods (H. G.), *At the Temple Church*, 185.
Cambridge Review, ii. Supplement Nos. 145, 161 (W. Sanday).
Christian World Pulpit, xv. 49 (W. Hubbard); xix. 401 (G. G. Bradley); xxxviii. 3 (W. J. Woods); lvi. 379 (J. Stalker).
Church of England Pulpit, lxii. 101 (C. G. Lang).
Preacher's Magazine, xxiv. 423 (E. G. Loosley).

The First Beatitude.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. v. 3.

1. The Beatitudes, which stand in the forefront of Christ's moral system, are not meant to convey an exhaustive description of the Christian character; they refer to moral qualities of which society can take no cognizance and to which it offers no rewards —unobtrusive qualities which press no claims and exact no recognitions, and which depend for their existence on a man's own inward self-regulation. No doubt the qualities here described issue in action, and often in very striking action. They are the motive power of many noble acts, they inspire much of the heroism of the world, their results win the praise, the enthusiasm, the homage of mankind; but in themselves they must exist, before anything of this kind can take place, as deliberately chosen laws of character and of inward being. They do not easily lend themselves to that self-advertisement which is the bane of our modern quasi-religious movements, and it would be hard to construct out of them materials for a thrilling biography; and yet, when accepted as a basis of character, they are full of power—their un-self-conscious influence is the strongest thing in the world, the thing that still works miracles, the thing that attracts, and moves, and sways, and tells in spite of every external gulf. They are to be cultivated for themselves, not for their results; for a man would find it hard, if not impossible, to cultivate any one of them for the value of the power and influence it would give him. The passion of the heart must love them for their own sake, if it would take them in perfectly and distribute all around their precious results. They come down from heaven, and none may summon the gifts of heaven for any ulterior reason; those who would win them must love them for themselves, for their own intrinsic beauty. Every one of them, if rightly looked at, will

kindle within us that sense of beauty, that desire, that longing, which is the first step towards possession. It is something to admire, to envy, to long for them, to be able to appreciate their moral beauty, to have "eyes to see and ears to hear," even if one fails grievously to reproduce them in oneself. And the very tone and temper of our day, while in some ways it is a hindrance, comes in here to help us. In an age when men were weary of the rules of ecclesiastics, the hair-splittings of mere ceremonialists and of moral expedients, Christ first uttered them, and their simple ethical beauty went into the hearts of those who heard them. Who can say that there is not much in our modern conditions of the same weariness, produced, too, by much the same means?

¶ Last night I spent at home; I meant to dedicate the time to writing, but I was in a mood too dark and hopeless to venture. The exhaustion of Sunday remained; I tried light reading in vain. At last Charley came in from school, and I made him do his Latin exercise before me; all the while I kept my eyes fixed on that engraving of the head of Christ by Leonardo da Vinci, which I have had framed, and felt the calm majesty of the countenance by degrees exerting an influence over me, which was sedative. Then I made him read over, slowly, the Beatitudes, and tried to fix my mind and heart upon them, and believe them; explaining them to him afterwards, and to myself as I went on. "Blessed are"—not the successful, but "the poor in spirit." "Blessed," not the rich, nor the admired, nor the fashionable, nor the happy, but "the meek and the pure in heart, and the merciful." They fell upon my heart like music.[1]

2. Our Lord begins His reckoning of blessedness with poverty in spirit. And this is evidently just; for if blessedness depends upon attainments, then the first step is to be conscious of poverty. He who thinks himself already rich, why should he desire increase? Poverty in spirit leads to mourning and to hunger and thirst for righteousness. The heavenly throne is given to those for whom it is prepared; but they must previously have been prepared, and preparation of heart involves the poverty in spirit from which the golden ladder of the Beatitudes climbs upward to blessedness. Earthly thrones are generally built with steps up to them; the remarkable thing about the thrones of the eternal kingdom is

[1] *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 442.

that the steps are all down to them. We must descend if we would reign, stoop if we would rise, gird ourselves to wash the feet of the disciples as a common slave in order to share the royalty of our Divine Master.

¶ The world has its own idea of blessedness. Blessed is the man who is always right. Blessed is the man who is satisfied with himself. Blessed is the man who is strong. Blessed is the man who rules. Blessed is the man who is rich. Blessed is the man who is popular. Blessed is the man who enjoys life. These are the beatitudes of sight and this present world. It comes with a shock, and opens a new realm of thought, that not one of these men entered Jesus' mind when He treated of blessedness.[1]

I.

The Poor.

1. Whom did Jesus mean by the poor in spirit? It is usually supposed that He meant the humble-minded, but this was probably not His meaning, as we see from the corresponding passage in St. Luke's Gospel. There we find the Beatitude in a simpler form: "Blessed are ye poor"; and this phrase must be taken in a literal sense of material poverty, because it is followed by the words, "Woe unto you that are rich!" and it is impossible, of course, to suppose that Jesus would have condemned those who are spiritually rich. We may feel tolerably sure that the very same people whom St. Luke calls simply "poor" are called by St. Matthew "poor in spirit." But why the variation of phrase, and which of the two phrases did Jesus actually use? The latter question is beside the mark. Strictly speaking, He did not use either. He spoke Aramaic, the language which in His day had superseded Hebrew in Palestine, and the Gospels were written in Greek. Both phrases are therefore translations, and the actual words used are beyond our reach. There is reason, however, to think that St. Matthew's "poor in spirit" is the later, and St. Luke's "poor" the earlier, version of the saying.

We might illustrate our Lord's point of view by a reference to the Psalms. The Psalmist frequently speaks of the poor (the

[1] John Watson, *The Mind of the Master*, 55.

poor and needy) as if they were as a matter of course the servants of God. They are constantly identified with the godly, the righteous, the faithful; they suffer undeservedly; God has a special care of them and listens to their cry. There is a certain amount of truth, no doubt, in this picture of the poor which the Psalms draw. It is true to some extent nowadays. Poverty still has a tendency to wean people from worldliness. Poverty may, of course, be so grinding as to fill the mind continually with sordid anxieties and so make a spiritual life almost impossible. But poor people are often strikingly unworldly.

There is a tendency in all material possession to obscure the needs it cannot satisfy. A full hand helps a man to forget an empty heart. The things that effectually empty life are the things that are commonly supposed to fill it. The man who is busy building barns and storehouses is sometimes shutting out the sweet alluring light of the city of God and the vision of heavenly mansions. "Property" is not the best stimulus to faith. "Blessed are the poor." There are fewer obstacles and obstructions between them and the Kingdom. They are not compassed about with spurious satisfactions. There are not so many things standing between them and life's essentials. There is one delusion the less to be swept from their minds. History bears all this out. If you look into the story of the Kingdom, you will find it has ever been the kingdom of the poor. They have ever been the first to enter in.

¶ The poverty which was honoured by the great painters and thinkers of the Middle Ages was an ostentatious, almost a presumptuous poverty: if not this, at least it was chosen and accepted—the poverty of men who had given their goods to feed the simpler poor, and who claimed in honour what they had lost in luxury; or, at the best, in claiming nothing for themselves, had still a proud understanding of their own self-denial, and a confident hope of future reward. But it has been reserved for this age to perceive and tell the blessedness of another kind of poverty than this; not voluntary nor proud, but accepted and submissive; not clear-sighted nor triumphant, but subdued and patient; partly patient in tenderness—of God's will; partly patient in blindness—of man's oppression; too laborious to be thoughtful—too innocent to be conscious—too long experienced in sorrow to be hopeful—waiting in its peaceful darkness for the

unconceived dawn; yet not without its own sweet, complete, untainted happiness, like intermittent notes of birds before the daybreak, or the first gleams of heaven's amber on the eastern grey.[1]

2. Yet the picture which the Psalms put before us is, after all, an ideal one. It is very far from being true that all poor people are, or ever were, followers of righteousness and godliness. Our Lord felt this, just as He also felt the corresponding truth about the rich. He begins by telling His disciples how hard it is for them that have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God, and then He modifies the saying by restricting it to them that trust in riches. Exactly the same modification has taken place in St. Matthew's version of the Beatitude as compared with St. Luke's. The blessing is pronounced on the poor, not, however, on the actual poor, but on those who embrace poverty in spirit, even though as a matter of fact they are rich. The man who by the external accident of his position in life is rich is not necessarily debarred from the blessing, because he can be, and indeed ought to be, in spirit poor.

In saying "Blessed are the poor in spirit," then, Jesus is saying, Blessed are the unworldly; blessed are they who, though in the world, are not of the world. The world says, Get all you can and keep all you get. Jesus says, Blessed are they who in will and heart at any rate have nothing. He does not say to every one, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." That is a counsel of perfection beyond the reach of the average man; it needs the spirituality of a Francis of Assisi to hear and obey that command. But He does say to us all, Do not cling to your possessions as though they were your own by some inalienable right. Be ready to resign them freely and cheerfully if need be. Remember that they are a trust from God. Be ready always to use them in His service and for the good of your fellow-men. If you can do all this, you are poor in spirit, and the blessing is yours.

¶ So long as 1700 years ago a tract was written upon this subject by Clement of Alexandria, entitled, *Quis dives salvetur?* ("What rich man shall be saved?"). The teaching of this ancient Father is still to the point: "Riches in themselves are a thing indifferent; the question with regard to them being this, as to

[1] Ruskin, *Academy Notes, 1858.*

whether they are used as an ὄργανον of good. By those whom He praises as poor in spirit, Christ means to denote those who, be they rich or poor, are in heart loosened from worldly possessions, are *therefore* poor; and to this idea an admirable parallel passage might be found in 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'They that possess, as though they possessed not' (comp. Jer. ix. 23); and in St. James i. 9, 10, 'But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low.'" [1]

II.

The Poor in Spirit.

The more usual interpretation of "the poor in spirit," however, has more interest and attractiveness, and deserves consideration.

1. Poverty of spirit is not poverty in the lower soul but in that higher part of man which comes into immediate contact with the Divine, in the higher soul which comes face to face with God, in that spirit with which "the Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God."

The simplest way to grasp its meaning is perhaps to consider its opposite, *i.e.*, the moral distortion of being lifted up in spirit. This uplifted spirit is the spirit of self-exaltation which filled the heart of Nebuchadnezzar when he contemplated the glories of the great Babylon which he had built. This is the spirit of those who are self-satisfied and at ease, who call their lands after their own names, and look at everything through the medium of their own self-importance. For such the world has no significance except as it affects their interest or their convenience. This is the radical spirit of worldliness; for it is the spirit which makes self the centre of everything. This spirit is the seed-ground of sin. All kinds of wrong become possible to the man who makes his own pleasure or aggrandizement the supreme rule of his life. Conscience has little place in the heart of the man who makes self the axis of reference in all his conduct. This inflated egotism is flat against the order of the universe, and essentially hostile to the Kingdom of God. It is in one sense the starting-place of evil; it is in another sense its climax. Egotism in moral life is

[1] E. G. Loosley.

the cause of most of the heedlessness and sinfulness of the world; and yet it is only after a prolonged indulgence of selfishness that the humane and kindly instincts of nature are destroyed. The evil principle of self works till all the finer, better, and purer feelings and aspirations are brought to naught. It stands out then as the naked antagonist of all that is good.

¶ And so Vergil and Dante come at last to the Angel-Guardian of the Cornice, against the place of ascent to the next ring—the Angel of Humility, "in his countenance such as a tremulous star at morn appears." He bids them to the steps and beats his wings on Dante's forehead. There comes to Dante's ears the sound of sweet voices singing, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and he notices that, though mounting steep stairs, he is lighter than when walking on the level below. Why is this? Vergil explains that one of the seven Sin-marks on Dante's brow has been erased by the Angel's wings, the Pride-mark, and that all the remaining six have, at the same time, become much fainter than before; a beautiful indication this of the doctrine that Pride is the deadliest foe of human salvation. When the last Sin-mark is removed Dante will experience not merely no difficulty in mounting but actual delight. Dante feels his brow on hearing this and finds that only six of the marks remain, and Vergil smiles at this. True humility is not even conscious of being humble.[1]

2. Poverty of spirit is not a feeling of self-disgust which comes over us when we compare our gifts and talents with those of others; it is born from no earthly inspiration, it proceeds from coming face to face with God. A man may be poor in spirit while his soul is on fire with enthusiasm for the cause of God, for the good of man. It is born of a double sense, both of the Divine greatness and of the Divine nearness. It is shown in unrepining acquiescence in our present limitations; it is shown in acceptance of the will of God in everything; it is shown not in self-depreciation, but in the strength that comes of trustfulness. It is the attitude which, in the presence of God, recognizes its entire dependence, empties itself, and is as a poor man, not that it may be feeble, but that God may fill it. It is the virtue which sends a man to his knees bowed and humbled and entranced before the Divine Presence, even in the hour of his most thrilling triumph. He cannot vaunt himself, he cannot push himself, he is but an instrument, and an

[1] H. B. Garrod, *Dante, Goethe's Faust, and Other Lectures*, 140.

instrument that can work only as long as it is in touch with its inward power; the "God within him" is the source of his power. What can he be but poor in spirit, how can he forget, how can he call out "worship me," when he has seen the Vision and heard the Voice, and felt the Power of God? Poor in spirit, emptied of mere vain, barren conceit, deaf to mere flattery he must be, because he has seen and known; he has cried "Holy, Holy, Holy"; he knows God, and henceforth he is not a centre, not an idol, but an instrument, a vessel that needs for ever refilling, if it is to overflow and do its mission. His is the receptive attitude; not that which receives merely that it may keep, but that which receives because it must send forth. And so he accepts all merely personal conditions, not as perfect in themselves, but as capable of being transmuted by that inward power which is his own yet not his own—his own because God is within him, not his own because he is the receiver, not the inspirer.

¶ I am sure there must be many who have a difficulty in understanding these words of our Lord—"Blessed are the poor in spirit." It must almost seem to them as if He had meant to pronounce a blessing on the cowardly and mean-spirited; whereas the blessing is on those who know and keep their place in the Divine hierarchy. We are dependent creatures, not self-existent or self-sufficing; but there is nothing degrading in this dependence, for we share it with the eternal Son. When we forget this, we lose our blessedness, for it consists in the spirit of sonship, by which alone we can receive and respond to our Father's love. God does not call for the acknowledgment of our dependence as a mere homage to His sovereignty, but because we are His children, and it is only through this acknowledgment that we can receive His fatherly love and blessing. The blessedness arises out of the spirit of dependence, and when that spirit departs the blessedness departs with it; therefore as the spirit of independence is the spirit of this world, we need not wonder at its unblessedness, for that spirit shuts the heart against God and cuts off its supply from the Fountain of Life.[1]

3. Only he who has discerned the ideal can feel what is described in the text as poverty of spirit. The man contented with himself, satisfied with his work and his position, to whom no ideal opens itself as something yet unattained, can never feel

[1] Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, *The Spiritual Order*, 233.

poverty of spirit. In short, this foundation Beatitude, on which all the other Beatitudes are built up, sets forth a universal law of human life; it describes the attitude of mind characteristic of the wisest, strongest, best of the human family. The greater a man is in any walk of life the wider his vision, and the keener his insight the greater is his poverty of spirit in the presence of the perfection he has seen.

> So doth the greater glory dim the less.
> A substitute shines brightly as a king
> Until a king be by; and then his state
> Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
> Into the main of waters.

The vision of the greater glory, showing the contrast between what he has seen and what he has in possession, makes the man full of poverty of spirit. The stars shine as brightly during the daylight as they do at night, but they are invisible because of the greater glory of the sun. One can be content with his present state only when he has seen no brighter, clearer vision.

¶ Miss Ellice Hopkins writes her impressions of a visit to the Briary at this time:

"At a very unassuming looking house at the foot of the Downs lived another of the Immortals, our great painter, who always went by the name of the 'Divine Watts.' Mrs. Cameron took us to see his studio, and to be introduced to him. We found a slightly built man with a fine head, most courteous in manner, and with the simplicity and humility of the immortal child that so often dwells at the heart of true genius. There was something pathetic to me in the occasional poise of the head, the face slightly lifted, as we see in the blind, as if in dumb beseeching to the fountain of Eternal Beauty for more power to think his thoughts after Him. There is always in his work a window left open to the infinite, the unattainable ideal." [1]

4. Poverty of spirit comes first because it must be first. It is the foundation on which alone the fabric of spiritual character can rise. It is the rich soil in which alone other graces will grow and flourish. Hill-tops are barren because the soil is washed off by the rains; but the valleys are fertile because there the rich deposits gather. In like manner proud hearts are sterile, affording no soil in which spiritual graces can grow; but lowly hearts

[1] *George Frederic Watts*, i. 299.

are fertile with grace, and in them all lovely things grow. If only we are truly poor in spirit, our life will be rich in its fruits.

¶ A consciousness of want and shortcoming is the condition of success and excellence in any sphere. Of those who aspire to be doctors, lawyers, painters, musicians, scholars, I would say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit—blessed are they who are conscious of their defect and want—for to them the high places of their professions belong." The only hopeless people in the world are the self-satisfied people, the people who do not think they need anything. The only man who will ever make a great scholar is the man who is keenly conscious of his own ignorance, who feels, like Sir Isaac Newton, that he has but gathered a few pebbles on the shore of the infinite ocean of truth; who carries the satchel still, like Michel Angelo, into an old age, and who, like J. R. Green, dies learning. But the man who starts by thinking he knows everything dooms himself to lifelong ignorance. A sense of want, humility of mind, is the very condition of excellence and success.[1]

¶ The most marked of all the moral features in Dr. Duncan's character was humility. He was singularly humble, in consideration of his great talents, of his vast treasures of learning, and of his attainments in the Divine life. But if we set all these aside, and compare him with other Christian men, we cannot but come to the conclusion that out of all the guests bidden in these days by the King within the circle of our knowledge, it was he that took the lowest room at the feast. This lowliness was allied to the childlike simplicity which pervaded his whole Christian course, and was made more evident by the helplessness which rendered him so unfit to guide himself in common matters, and so willing to be guided by others. But its root lay in his sense of the majesty of God, which was far more profound than in other men, and humbled him lower in the dust; in his perception and his love of holiness, and the consciousness of his own defect; in his sense of ingratitude for the unparalleled love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in his abiding conviction of past sin and of present sinfulness. This habitual humbling was deepened by the wounding of his very tender conscience, through yielding himself to be carried away by what chanced to take hold of his mind. These combined elements rendered him an example of an altogether rare and inimitable humility. Men who may be reckoned holier might be named out of those who served the Lord along with

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Way into the Kingdom*, 31.

him; but among them all it would be hard to find one so humble. The holiness of Robert M'Cheyne, if not so deep, was more equal, and more thoroughly leavened the character hour by hour. The holiness of William Burns was in some respects as deep, and it was singularly constant. They were both more watchful, and therefore more evenly holy. But in the race to stoop down into their Lord's sepulchre, John Duncan outran them both; he was the humblest of the three, and of all the men whom most of us have known.[1]

5. We must also distinguish between poverty of spirit and self-depreciation. There is a false humility which finds pleasure in calling itself a worm and a miserable sinner, simply as an excuse for being no better. It is a false humility which pleads its humbleness as an excuse for aiming low. It is a false humility which says, "We are no better than our fathers were," as an excuse for not trying to rise to a higher level, and for maintaining a low standard and perpetuating abuses. It is a false humility which leads us to take the lower room, that we may shirk our duties and avoid taking a lead when we are called upon to do so. It was not true humility that led the idle servant to bury his talent in the ground. Whatever name it may assume, it is conceit and pride that in the heart believes itself fitted for higher things, and is discontented with its part on the world's stage. It is pride that wishes to be ministered unto, and is too conceited to minister. There is no true humility in pretending to be worse than we are, in underrating the gifts that God has given us, in declining to take the part for which we are fitted.

¶ Do you want a cure for that false humility, that mock modesty which says, "I am not worthy," and trumpets its denial till all the world knows that an honour has been offered; which, while it says with the lips, "It is too great for me," feels all the time in the heart that self-consciousness of merit which betrays itself in the affected walk and the showy humility? Would you be free from this folly? Feel that God is all; that whether He makes you great, or leaves you unknown, it is best for you, because it is His work.[2]

[1] A. Moody Stuart, *Recollections of the late John Duncan*, 175.

[2] Stopford A. Brooke.

III.

The Benediction.

1. The bulk of the remaining Beatitudes point onward to a future; this deals with the present; not "theirs *shall be*," but "theirs *is* the kingdom." It is an all-comprehensive promise, holding the succeeding ones within itself, for they are but diverse aspects—modified according to the necessities which they supply—of that one encyclopædia of blessings, the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven—what is it here? Surely we shall read the words aright if we think of them as conveying the promise of a present dominion of no ordinary kind; an inward power that comes here and now, and finds its exercise in ways all unknown to the possessor, that blesses those whom it has never seen and cheers those who have felt only its shadow; an inward un-self-conscious, often unrealized, power that flows out and is conveyed in a word or a look, or even by something more subtle still. So does Christian influence work among men. The poor in spirit make men believe that Christ is God, because they show the Divine beneath the human.

¶ Often, as formerly with Jesus, a look, a word sufficed Francis to attach to himself men who would follow him until their death. It is impossible, alas! to analyze the best of this eloquence, all made of love, intimate apprehension, and fire. The written word can no more give an idea of it than it can give us an idea of a sonata of Beethoven or a painting by Rembrandt. We are often amazed, on reading the memoirs of those who have been great conquerors of souls, to find ourselves remaining cold, finding in them all no trace of animation or originality. It is because we have only a lifeless relic in the hand; the soul is gone. It is the white wafer of the sacrament, but how shall that rouse in us the emotions of the beloved disciple lying on the Lord's breast on the night of the Last Supper?[1]

2. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who feel their own unworthiness and utter need, and who seek in Christ the sufficiency they do not find in themselves. They have already

[1] Paul Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 131.

entered into their heritage because they have learnt their true position in it—fit to rule because they have learnt to serve, fit to influence because they have felt the Divine spark kindling them. They may not be called to high office; their place in the world may be a very lowly one, but their rule is more of a fact now than if they had the mastery of many legions. For there is no influence so certain, so strong, so compelling, as that which is founded upon the assured sense of the Divine indwelling, and the Divine co-operation; if a man has that sense he must become poor in spirit, emptied of mere conceit and shallow pride, because he has seen what real greatness is.

¶ The clearest and most significant of all the relationships of this grace of humility is that which connects it with greatness. Humility and greatness always walk together. I do not think that Ruskin ever spoke a truer word than when he said, "I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility." That truth shines with lustre upon every page of our human record. There is nothing more beautiful in the whole of the human story than the humility of the greatest men. The mind of the seer is not so far from the heart of the little child as we sometimes imagine. Most of the great scientific discoveries have been achieved through the spirit of humility. Men have been willing to be led to great discoveries through observation of the simplest things—an apple falling from the tree or steam coming through a kettle's spout. The willingness to learn has opened the doors to the most fruitful discoveries. An over-assertive knowledge is always the cloak of ignorance. And as with knowledge, so with everything else. Power always veils itself. It does not seek to produce an impression. It does not need to do that. It walks in the paths of the humble. There are many people in the world who will not stoop to menial tasks. In their blindness they imagine humble duties to be a sign of lowly station or inferior nature. If they but knew, there is no sign of inferiority so patent as that which cannot stoop in lowliness or work in secret. There is a beautiful and significant sentence in St. John's record of the ministry of our Lord which illustrates this association between greatness and humility. This is how it reads: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet." The moment when He was most conscious of greatness was the time when He performed the most menial duty. And that association is always

true in humble life. Greatness is never ashamed to be found in lowly guise. The surest sign of a high nature is that it can stoop without apologizing for itself.[1]

3. We can understand the happiness of this attitude. The man is absorbed in the work—the God-given work—before him. He has no leisure to pause and ask what the world thinks of him. There is a real work to do, and he is alive to its importance and to the necessity of turning his whole energy into it. The work has to be done; the trust must be discharged; the criticisms of the world, whether favourable or unfavourable, are of little moment. Egotism has so small a place in his spirit that he is neither uplifted nor depressed by the words of men's lips. His soul is set on other things. He seeks the Kingdom of God, and no kingdom of self—and it is in the emancipation of self from self that he finds that Divine Kingdom. He loses himself to find himself. This is the note that seals the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven. In fact, this is the keynote of all our Lord's teaching. It is the note of His own life. It is expressly what He says of Himself: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is what He teaches by His example. For He ever watched the Father's hand. He spoke the Father's words, He did the Father's works, and all He thought, felt, and did was done in obedience to the Father. He emptied Himself. At every fresh departure in His work He spent the night in prayer and fellowship with the Father, and whenever He needed wisdom and power for His life-work He sought these from the Father. Thus in virtue of His poverty of spirit He was in possession of the Kingdom.

¶ I cannot tell you how great a point our Blessed Father made of self-abandonment, *i.e.*, self-surrender into the hands of God. In one place he speaks of it as: "The cream of charity, the odour of humility, the flower of patience, and the fruit of perseverance. Great," he says, "is this virtue, and worthy of being practised by the best-beloved children of God." And again, "Our Lord loves with a most tender love those who are so happy as to abandon themselves wholly to His fatherly care, letting themselves be governed by His divine Providence without any idle speculations as to whether the workings of this Providence

[1] Sidney M. Berry, *Graces of the Christian Character*, 78.

will be useful to them to their profit, or painful to their loss, and this because they are well assured that nothing can be sent, nothing permitted by this paternal and most loving Heart, which will not be a source of good and profit to them. All that is required is that they should place all their confidence in Him, and say from their heart, 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit,' my soul, my body, and all that I have, to do with them as it shall please Thee."[1]

¶ Christ showed that sacrifice, self-surrender, death, is the beginning and the course and the aim and the essential principle of the higher life. To find life in our own way, to wish to save it, to seek to gain it, to love it, is, He proclaims, to miss it altogether. . . . The law of sacrifice is based on essential moral relations, justified by the facts of common experience, welcomed by the universal conscience. . . . Sacrifice alone is fruitful. . . . The essence of sin is selfishness in respect of men, and self-assertion in respect of God, the unloving claim of independence, the arrogant isolation of our interests. . . . That which we use for ourselves perishes ignobly: that which He uses for us but not on us proves the beginning of a fuller joy. Isolation is the spring of death; life is revealed through sacrifice. . . . Vicarious toil, pain, suffering, is the very warp of life. When the Divine light falls upon it, it becomes transformed into sacrifice. . . . Not one tear, one pang, one look of tender compassion, one cry of pitying anguish, one strain of labouring arm, offered in the strength of God for the love of man, has been in vain. They have entered into the great life with a power to purify, and cheer, and nerve, measured not by the standard of our judgment but by the completeness of the sacrifice which they represent.[2]

[1] J. P. Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis De Sales*, 278.
[2] Bishop Westcott, *The Victory of the Cross*, 22.

The Pure in Heart.

LITERATURE.

Ainsworth (P. C.), *The Blessed Life*, 131.
Barrett (G. S.), *Musings for Quiet Hours*, 110.
Dykes (J. O.), *The Manifesto of the King*, 119.
Gore (C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 40.
Houchin (J. W.), *The Vision of God*, 1.
Hull (E. L.), *Sermons*, i. 154.
Huntington (F. D.), *Christ in the Christian Year*: Advent to Trinity, 219.
Jones (J. S.), *The Invisible Things*, 34.
Kennett (R. H.), *In Our Tongues*, 51.
Lightfoot (J. B.), *Cambridge Sermons*, 34.
Lockyer (T. F.), *The Inspirations of the Christian Life*, 144.
Maclaren (A.), *The Beatitudes*, 53.
Meyer (H. H.), in *Drew Sermons on the Golden Texts for 1910*, 19.
Miller (J. R.), *The Master's Blesseds*, 125.
Momerie (A. W.), *The Origin of Evil*, 283.
Neale (J. M.), *Sermons for Children*, 105.
Parkhurst (C. H.), *The Blind Man's Creed*, 205.
Peabody (F. G.), *Mornings in the College Chapel*, i. 69.
Smith (W. C.), *Sermons*, 50.
Thompson (J. R.), *Burden Bearing*, 187.
Vaughan (C. J.), *University Sermons*, 425.
Wardell (R. J.), *Studies in Homiletics*, 106.
Wilberforce (B.), *Spiritual Consciousness*, 88.
Wray (J. J.), *Honey in the Comb*, 59.
British Congregationalist, February 2, 1911 (J. H. Jowett).
Cambridge Review, v. Supplement No. 126 (G. Salmon).
Christian World Pulpit, xxix. 238 (J. Lloyd); xxxix. 12 (C. A. Vince); lxvi. 337 (W. T. Davison); lxxxiii. 33 (J. S. Holden).

The Pure in Heart.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—Matt. v. 8.

If there be in the bright constellation of the Beatitudes one particular star, it is this text. If in blessedness there be a crown of blessedness, it is here. If there be a character that in its very quintessence is spiritual, it is this. And if there be a delight above all conceivable delights, it is that which is promised in these well-known words. So lofty a verse is this, that it is one of the texts which the preacher trembles to take, and yet is continually impelled to take, that at least he may teach himself if he cannot teach other people, and that preacher and congregation together may do a little towards climbing up to summits which seem like the far-off Alpine heights.

> Oh, snow so pure, Oh, peak so high,
> I shall not reach you till I die.

Yet lofty and remote as they seem, these words are in truth among the most hopeful and radiant that ever came even from Christ's lips. For they offer the realization of an apparently impossible character. They promise the possession of an apparently impossible vision. They soothe fears, and tell us that the sight from which, were it possible, we should sometimes shrink, is the source of our purest gladness.

I.

The Vision.

"They shall see God"; what do these words mean? In their widest and fullest significance they must remain to us an eternal mystery. They express the object around which all the hopes and fears of the best men of the human race have always gathered, and

around which they are gathering still. To see God has been the ultimate aim of all philosophy; it is the ultimate hope of all science, and it will ever remain the ultimate desire of all nations.

¶ In all the nobler religions which the world has seen, we can trace an endeavour to rise to a vision of God. The Brahmin on the burning plains of the East gave up all the present charm of life, and, renouncing ease and love, passed his years in silent thought, hoping to be absorbed into the Eternal. The Greek philosopher spoke of passions that clogged the soul's wings, and desires that darkened its piercing eye, and he strove to purge his spirit from them by philosophy, that he might free its pinions and quicken its sight for beholding the Infinite. And in this light we can understand how the monks in the Middle Ages became so marvellously earnest. These men felt a Presence around their path which at one time appeared to reveal itself like a dream of splendour, and at another swept like a vision of terror across the shuddering heart; and to behold Him they crushed their longings for fellowship, steeled their hearts to the calls of affection, and alone, in dens and deserts, hoped, by mortifying the body, to see God in the soul. In a word, the dream which has haunted the earnest of our world, has ever been this — to be blessed, man must know the Eternal. Christ proclaims that dream to be a fact—they *are* blessed who see God.[1]

1. To see God is to stand on the highest point of created being. Not until we see God—no partial and passing embodiment of Him, but the abiding Presence—do we stand upon our own mountain-top, the height of the existence which God has given us, and up to which He is leading us. That there we should stand is the end of our creation. This truth is at the heart of everything, means all kinds of completions, may be uttered in many ways; but language will never compass it, for form will never contain it. Nor shall we ever see, that is, know, God perfectly. We shall indeed never absolutely know man or woman or child; but we may know God as we never can know human being, as we never can know ourselves. We not only may, but we must, so know Him, and it can never be until we are pure in heart.

¶ Religion largely lies in the consciousness of our true relation to Him who made us; and the yearning for the realization of this

[1] E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, i. 155.

consciousness found constant expression in Tennyson's works and conversation. Perhaps its clearest expression is to be found in his instructions to his son: "Remember, I want 'Crossing the Bar' to be always at the end of all my works."

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the Bar.

When in answer to the question, What was his deepest desire of all? he said, "A clearer vision of God," it exactly expressed the continued strivings of his spirit for more light upon every possible question, which so constantly appear in his poems.[1]

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?[2]

2. To see God is to be admitted into His immediate presence and friendship. In the court language of ancient Oriental despotisms, where the Sovereign was revered as if he were the vicegerent of Heaven, to "see the king's face" stood for the highest felicity of the most favoured subjects. It was the petition of the disgraced prince Absalom, after he had for two full years resided in the capital without being received at his father's palace: "Now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be iniquity in

[1] *Tennyson and His Friends*, 305.
[2] Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism.*

me, let him kill me!" "Happy are these thy servants," said the African queen to Solomon; happy in this, that they "stand continually before thee." So the seven chief princes of the Medo-Persian Empire who sat first in the kingdom of Ahasuerus were they "which saw the king's face." The same magnificent phraseology passed from the court to the temple. In the Hebrew State, Jehovah was the national Sovereign; and the reigning king was, in no flattering hyperbole, but in constitutional law, His elected vicegerent. The temple was His palace, the most holy place His chamber of presence and of audience; and the one thing desired by His devout and favoured servants was to behold His beauty; their prayer, that His face would shine on them; their hope, to see His face in righteousness, and one day to be satisfied with His likeness.

¶ In prayer there would sometimes come upon me such a sense of the Presence of God that I seemed to be all engulfed in God. I think the learned call this mystical experience; at any rate, it so suspends the ordinary operations of the soul that she seems to be wholly taken out of herself. This tenderness, this sweetness, this regale is nothing else but the Presence of God in the praying soul. God places the soul in His immediate Presence, and in an instant bestows Himself upon the soul in a way she could never of herself attain to. He manifests something of His greatness to the soul at such times: something of His beauty, something of His special and particular grace. And the soul enjoys God without dialectically understanding just how she so enjoys Him. She burns with love without knowing what she has done to deserve or to prepare herself for such a rapture. It is the gift of God, and He gives His gifts to whomsoever and whensoever He will.[1]

3. The theophany, or visible discovery of the Divine Being, which was given to the best period of Hebrew history, was a prefigure of the Incarnation—the chief theophany of all time—in which, through a human character and life, there has been discovered to us all the ethical beauty and splendour of the Godhead. To "see God" must now for ever mean nothing else than this: to see His "truth and grace" mirrored in the face of that Man, who alone of all men on earth "is of God, and hath seen the Father."

[1] Saint Teresa.

¶ We are in the world to see God. That is the final spiritual purpose of life. Across the cradle of the babe and the playtime of the girls and boys this purpose ever falls. It can be forgotten and frustrated, but as life's highest possibility and truest destiny it is always with us. It follows the prodigal in his wandering, the fool in his folly, the strong man in his wilfulness. It is all-inclusive. It waits men in the quiet places of thought, and in the clangour of the world's work. The student, the book-writer, the weaver at his loom, the buyer and seller, the woman mid her household cares—the vision is close to them all. It is before us in the sunlight and the green earth, it is about us in all the grace and trust and intimacy of home life. In youth and age, in gladness and in grieving, the vision waits. And most of all the vision draws near to us in the life of Him who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[1]

¶ Through all the complexities of Christ's mind and mission, how essentially single His spirit and simple His method—rare as morning air, limpid as spring water, clear as a running brook, ever standing in the truth, utterly veracious and sublimely superior to worldly policy! Is not this, indeed, the meaning of that choice beatitude—among those beatitudes with their sevenfold colours like a rainbow round the throne of Christ—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"? Not the "immaculate"—it would be superfluous to say, "Blessed are the holy"—but rather those of pure intent and single spirit, free from duplicities in their motives. "Blessed" in that trueness of spirit which gives *vision*, that honest and unadulterated child-heart which enables us to see our Father-God and the Good everywhere.[2]

If clearer vision Thou impart,
  Grateful and glad my soul shall be;
But yet to have a purer heart
  Is more to me.

Yea, only as the heart is clean
  May larger vision yet be mine,
For mirrored in its depths are seen
  The things divine.[3]

[1] P. C. Ainsworth, *The Blessed Life*, 132.
[2] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 90.
[3] Walter C. Smith, *Poetical Works*, 478.

II.

The Condition of the Vision.

There are three distinct kinds of sight. There is, first of all, physical sight, which depends chiefly on bodily organs, and which merely enables us to distinguish material objects from one another. Then, secondly, there is mental sight—the sight of the scientist and the poet. This faculty helps men to discover analogies and resemblances and connexions between dissimilar and distant things; and hence it gives rise to the metaphors and similes of poetry, and leads to the discovery of the laws of nature. It was the faculty of mental vision, for example, that led to the establishment of the widest scientific generalization, by suggesting to Newton that perhaps the earth might exercise the same influence of attraction upon the moon as it did upon a falling apple. Then, thirdly, there is spiritual sight, which belongs to the man of faith and pure heart. Spiritual vision enables men to see Him who is invisible.

¶ I care not whether God's self-revelation in the conscience be called an *immediate vision* of God in the experiences of conscience, or whether it be taken as *an inference* drawn from the data they supply. It is the truth contained in them; with one man it may be only implicitly felt in their solemn and mystic character; with another, explicitly and immediately seen emerging from them as they come, and making him the Seer of God rather than the reasoner about Him. In any case, the constitution of our moral nature is unintelligible, except as living in response to an objective Perfection pervading the universe with Holy Law.[1]

1. God cannot be seen by the eye of sense. Of course, we know that; we admit it at once; and yet men have an idea that God was nearer to the patriarchs, and the people in the early days who, in a vision or in some way or other—we hardly know how—did see God; and though they do not know what heaven is, they think that somehow or other, by and by, in another state, they will see and consciously have a sensible vision. It cannot be. "Eye hath not seen," and eye can never see. And God is not seen by reason. Doubtless if reason were freed from all

[1] James Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, ii. 28.

clogs and hindrances and drawbacks, if it worked with perfect clearness and completeness, we might reason about God; but even so we should conclude and argue and infer; we should not see. Nor by imagination. Imagination may do a great deal, but the danger with regard to it is that we deceive ourselves, that we worship our own fancies, and that the image below us is one which we see in a mirror, and which we ourselves have, so to speak, created. And God cannot be seen by means of traditional knowledge, though that is very good. One hopes that religious knowledge will continually be handed on from parents to children, and that the children are being taught in all that is good, and that they learn that God is infinite and eternal and omniscient; and well indeed that so they should learn. But they do not see Him by that process. And faith—faith can do a great deal. It has a marvellous power of transporting us beyond ourselves, and beyond the world of the seen and tangible; but faith itself is opposed to sight, and though faith can trust and obey, it cannot see.

¶ You know that your friend is never seen by the eye of the body; you can discern a form, a figure, a countenance, by which you know that he is near; but that is not the friend you love; you discern him spiritually; you understand his inner character; you know his truth, his nobleness, his affection, his charity—all these the eye of sense cannot see. A stranger does not see him thus; he sees only the visible form and feature which imperfectly represent the qualities of mind and heart which you *know*; but you see in that friend things which were invisible to the other. It is in this sense—in understanding the truth and goodness, in feeling the pity and charity, in holding communion with the loving spirit of the Father—that Christ speaks of seeing God.[1]

¶ Science is teaching us now that at each end of the spectrum, beyond the red rays and the violet rays, there are rays of light which our eyes cannot perceive. We know perfectly well that there are notes of music too acute or too grave for our ears to apprehend them. Do they not exist, then, though the ear cannot hear them? And so in religious matters, even though we are regular worshippers in the Lord's house, and profess to know a great deal about Christianity, we may be as blind men walking in a gallery of pictures or—I will not say as deaf men, but—as a large number of those who go to a Beethoven concert.[2]

[1] E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, i. 159.

[2] W. T. Davison.

2. The vision of God is possible only to the pure in heart. The word "pure" as ordinarily used, in Hebrew, in Greek, and in English, means "without alloy," "clean," "clear," "simple," "single." It is applied, in the Bible, to virgin gold, to a clean table or candlestick, to flawless glass, to unmixed oil, and to water that is only water. It does not necessarily involve a moral element. It never stands for absolute sinlessness of being. Hence it is to be taken, in the Sermon on the Mount as well as elsewhere, when connected with "heart," or "mind," as meaning "single," "simple," "unmixed." The "pure in heart" are those whose minds, or very selves, are single, simple, undivided and unalloyed in one aim and purpose.

Single-mindedness, or simple-mindedness, is a characteristic of childhood. A child is all attent to one thing at a time, looking at that one thing with single eye and simpleness of mind; while double-mindedness, or divided thinking, is the peril of the full-grown person. How many things a keen-eyed child will see in an everyday walk that are unnoticed by the father whom he accompanies! The father has too many things in his mind, or on his mind, to observe that which, for the moment, is the all in all to the single-eyed and simple-minded—or, as the Bible would call it, the pure-hearted—child. Therefore it is that our Lord said to His maturer disciples: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke xviii. 17). The pure in heart are the child-minded. They shall see God, because when they are looking for Him they are not looking for anything else. Their eyes are single, their minds are undivided, and their whole being goes out towards the object of their search. They seek for God, and they find Him when they search for Him with all their mind.

¶ He returned to the Abbey, and preached his sermon on the words, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The short, simple discourse contained the last words that he spoke in Westminster Abbey. By one of those strange coincidences that seem more than chance, the subject of his sermon was the blessedness of purity of heart and life, which those who knew him best considered to be the distinguishing quality of his character and career. "The words," he said, "may bear a twofold meaning—

pure, disinterested love of truth, and pure and clean aversion to everything that defiles." He goes on to give three examples of the blessedness of purity in men whose hearts and writings were pure, and who not only abstained from anything which could defile the soul, but fixed their eyes intently on those simple affections and those great natural objects of beauty which most surely guard the mind from corrupting influences. "And what," he asks in the words which conclude his last sermon, "is the reason that our Saviour gives for this blessedness of the pure in heart? It is that they shall see God. What is the meaning of this connexion? It is because, of all the obstacles which can intervene between us and an insight into the invisible and the Divine, nothing presents so coarse and thick a veil as the indulgence of the impure passions which lower our nature, and because nothing can so clear up our better thoughts, and nothing leaves our minds so open to receive the impression of what is good and high, as the single eye and pure conscience, which we may not, perhaps, be able to reach, but which is an indispensable condition of having the doors of our mind kept open and the channel of communication kept free between us and the Supreme and Eternal Fountain of all purity and of all goodness."[1]

¶ I hardly know whether Dean Stanley's last words will make an adequate impression upon the public. The Dean had begun on Saturday afternoons a course of sermons on the Beatitudes. In great weakness he finished the fourth sermon a little more than a week before his death, and for his text on that occasion he took two of the benedictions together, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." He illustrated his discourse from conspicuous monuments in the Abbey, taking sometimes one instance, and sometimes another, but I think that the Dean himself was the best instance of these two benedictions, for he was a merciful man, and as pure in heart as a little child. In some aspects of his character he was more like a little child than a full-grown man who had lived sixty-five years in the midst of this wicked world. In many aspects of its wickedness the world had never tainted his pure soul.[2]

3. It is not enough to be clean outside. In our Lord's days much attention was paid by religious people to external purity. They had many ceremonies of washing. They washed nearly

[1] R. E. Prothero, *Life of Dean Stanley*, ii. 567.

[2] *Bishop Fraser's Lancashire Life*, 257.

everything they used—not to make it clean, but to make it holy. They were quick to condemn any one who failed to observe all the rules for outward cleansing. Yet Jesus reproved them for their insincerity, for while they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, within they were full of extortion and excess. He said they were like whited sepulchres, which appeared beautiful without, but within were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. It is not enough to have a fair exterior; the heart must be pure. It is in the heart that God would live. The heart, too, is the centre of the life. If the heart be not holy, the life cannot be holy.

¶ "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." There is no fault in our Authorized Version in this passage, but the words "pure in heart" should be rendered in modern English, "clear in their affections." These are the truly simple, who read Dante's *Ben del Intelletto*—the vision of the Godhead. To be truly pure in heart is to search for one's main duty and to set oneself to do it, subordinating to this life-task all other desires and all distractions of a more or less material kind.[1]

Bernard made signal to me with a smile
To look above; but of myself had I
Anticipated his desire the while;
For now my vision, clearer than before,
Within that Beam of perfect Purity
And perfect Truth was entering more and more.
From this time forward that which filled my sight
Became too lofty for our mortal strains;
And memory fails to take so vast a flight.[2]

¶ In the Middle Ages, and sometimes since, men who desired earnestly to see the vision of God strove to attain it by asceticism —that is, by a sort of forced, mechanical purity. The mechanism, we believe, failed, for it was not appointed of God, but was a clumsy contrivance of men. Yet the attempt showed a recognition, however perverse, of the truth which Christ puts here so beautifully and simply. The same truth inspired the chivalrous legend of the Holy Grail. Many brave and worthy knights addressed themselves to the quest of the Sangreal, yearning to see the vision of the chalice that brimmed red with the very blood of God Incarnate, and to win the mysterious blessings which that

[1] H. B. Garrod, *Dante, Goethe's Faust, and Other Lectures*, 376.
[2] Dante, *Paradiso*, xxxiii. 49–57 (trans. by Wright).

vision brought. But to none was it given to accomplish the quest save to the pure in heart. The knight who could sing,

> My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure—

he it was who was sanctified and consoled by the mystic vision

> A gentle sound, an awful light!
> Three angels bear the Holy Grail:
> With folded feet, in stoles of white,
> On sleeping wings they sail.
> Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
> My spirit beats her mortal bars,
> As down dark tides the glory slides,
> And star-like mingles with the stars.

Sir Galahad no longer rides in harness on quests of knight-errantry; he labours without fame in the byways of life. But he is still consoled by the reward of purity, and endures as seeing Him who is invisible.[1]

4. There is no true purity apart from the absolute enthronement of God in the affections. It is not the absence of unholy affections, it is the presence of a holy and surpassing earnest love, that makes us really pure. Man is not made by negatives. It is not what the heart loves not, but what it loves, that makes the man: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The soul is so supremely an altar that it must worship something in its inmost shrine; and unless it worship God there, it cannot be pure.

Jesus saw God reflected in His own soul. His own pure soul was a mirror in which spiritual imageship to the Heavenly Father was perfectly revealed. For us His thoughts were God's thoughts. His love was God's love. His will was God's will. So perfectly at one with the holy Father was His pure heart that, when He looked into the depths of His own being, He had His profoundest revelations of the moral nature of His Father. There was no blur upon His soul. The cloudless likeness of the Heavenly Father was there. Alas, that upon our hearts the breath of sin has condensed itself so that we see in ourselves only a foggy image of God!

[1] C. A. Vince.

The truth in God's breast
Lies trace upon trace on ours imprest:
Tho' He is so bright, and we are so dim,
We were made in His image to witness Him.

¶ The heart where "Christ dwells" is, so far as His residence there is unhindered and entire, the purified heart. Let Him be welcomed not into its vestibule only but into its interior chambers, and the Presence will itself be purity. Before Him so coming, so abiding, the strife of passion cannot but subside. Flowing out from His intimate converse there, the very love of God will mix itself with the motives and the movements of the will. The heart thus made the chamber of His life will by a sure law reflect His character; nay, it will find itself shaped and dilated by His heart, not from its exterior or circumference, but from its centre.[1]

¶ Mark Rutherford says, "The love of the beautiful is itself moral. What we love in it is virtue. A perfect form or a delicate colour is the expression of something which is destroyed in us by subjugation to the baser desires or meanness; and he who has been unjust to man or woman misses the true interpretation of a cloud or a falling wave." In the light of this beatitude I think he is right. Sin does not cheat a man out of the fragrance of a rose, but it cheats him out of that sweeter soul-fragrance of Divine love that is folded in every petal. Sin does not veil from our eyes the fashion of things seen, but it obscures their eternal and spirit-satisfying meaning. The impure shall see all—except God. That is to say, they shall see nothing as it is. For the pure-hearted all the mystery of the waking earth tells something of the soul's immortal story. Through the avenues of sight the pure heart goes on and finds insight. Through all that the ear can hear and the hand can touch, it passes into that real world that is so near to us all, if we but knew it, where failing voices utter unfailing messages and where beneath the ephemeral the soul finds the eternal.[2]

5. The vision of the pure in heart is its own exceeding blessedness. Holiness has in itself the elements of happiness. It frees us from a thousand sources of pain, the inward strife of the heart with itself, the condemning voice of conscience, the fret and worry of anxious worldly care, the bitterness of passion, anger, envy, jealousy, discontent, and a thousand thorns that spring in

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Faith*, 156.
[2] P. C. Ainsworth, *The Blessed Life*, 137.

the soil of the natural heart—these roots are all removed and the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," keeps the heart and mind, and makes life a heaven below.

¶ Horace Bushnell gives his own experience in these words: "Clear of all the vices, having a naturally active-minded, inquiring habit, never meaning to get away from the truth, one has yet relapsed into such doubt as to find that he has nearly lost the conviction of God, and cannot, if he would, say with emphasis that God exists. Such a one pacing in his chamber, comes some day suddenly upon the question—Is there then no truth that I do believe? Yes, there is one; there is a distinction of right and wrong, that I never doubted, and can see not how I can. Nay, I am even quite sure of this. Then forthwith starts up the question—Have I ever taken the principle of right for my law? Have I ever thrown my life out on it, to become *all* that it requires of me? No matter what becomes of my difficulties, if I cannot take a first principle so inevitably true and live in it. Here, then, will I begin, If there is a God, as I rather hope than dimly believe there is, then He is a right God. If I have lost Him in wrong, perhaps I shall find Him in right. Will He not help me, or, perchance, even be discovered to me? Then he prays to the dim God so dimly felt. It is an awfully dark prayer in the first look of it; but it is the truest and best that he can; the better and more true that he puts no orthodox colours on it; and the prayer and the vow are so profoundly meant that his soul is borne up with God's help, as it were by some unseen chariot, and permitted to see the opening of heaven. He rises, and it is as if he had gotten wings. The whole sky is luminous about him. It is the morning of a new eternity. After this all troublesome doubt of God's reality is gone. A being so profoundly felt must inevitably be."[1]

[1] C. H. Parkhurst, *The Blind Man's Creed*, 215.

The Salt of the Earth.

LITERATURE.

Austin (A. B.), *Linked Lives*, 221.
Brooke (S. A.), *Short Sermons*, 22.
Chadwick (W. E.), *Christ and Everyday Life*, 134.
Church (R. W.), *Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*, 110.
Cope (F. L.), *A North Country Preacher*, 161.
Dixon (A. C.), *Through Night to Morning*, 194.
Dyke (H. van), *The Open Door*, 63.
Fürst (A.), *Christ the Way*, 31.
Gough (E. J.), *The Religion of the Son of Man*, 57.
Hamer (D. J.), *Salt and Light*, 3.
Hamilton (J.), *Works*, vi. 212.
King (T. S.), *Christianity and Humanity*, 267.
Lyttelton (E.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 113.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew i.–viii., 178.
Mantle (J. G.), *God's To-Morrow*, 19.
Meyer (F. B.), *The Directory of the Devout Life*, 33.
Miller (J.), *Sermons Literary and Scientific*, ii. 369.
Peabody (F. G.), *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii. 52.
Smith (N.), *Members One of Another*, 153.
Smith (W. C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 37.
Symonds (A. R.), *Fifty Sermons*, 352.
Tait (A.), *The Charter of Christianity*, 97.
Thorold (A. W.), *Questions of Faith and Duty*, 179.
Trench (R. C.), *Westminster and Other Sermons*, 281.
Whately (R.), *Sermons*, 251.
Christian World Pulpit, xl. 360 (A. Melville); lviii. 183 (H. S. Holland); lxx. 49 (A. Clayton); lxxvi. 75 (W. Glover); lxxxii. 282 (N. Marshall).

The Salt of the Earth.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.—Matt. v. 13.

The exact position of these words in the Sermon on the Mount must be carefully remembered. They follow immediately after the Beatitudes—those sayings in which Christ had described the various qualities of character essential to the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, for one who would obey the rule which He had come on earth to establish and extend. A citizen of that Kingdom, Christ had just taught His hearers, must be humble-minded: he must grieve over the sin and the various evils which exist in the world; he must be gentle; he must desire righteousness above all things; he must be merciful; he must be pure-minded in the fullest sense of the words; he must do all in his power to promote peace; and he must be prepared to suffer in order that righteousness may be promoted and extended. A character which fulfils these conditions, that is, a character of which these virtues are the factors, is the character desired by Christ, and such a character is His own.

Immediately after this description has been given, as soon as ever this ideal has been set us as the standard, Christ addresses the words of the text to those who were following Him and learning from Him. To them He looked to cultivate this character. And for a moment He thinks of them, not as they actually were, but as He would have them be. For a moment He treats them as if His ideal for them were already realized in them; He does not say ye shall be, but ye *are* the salt of the earth. The spirit of all the united qualities commended in the Beatitudes is the salt of the life of the world. All of them—meekness and humility and purity and the rest—run up into two: the spirit of love and the spirit of righteousness. These, then, embodied in

human life, are the salt of the earth, the salt of Churches and nations, of all forms of human activity, of thought, of imagination, of business, of the daily life of men. These keep humanity fresh and living, preserve it from corruption, and add to it the savour which secures to men their true and enduring enjoyment of life. But chiefly, in Christ's present idea, they were the freshening, purifying, preserving element in His Kingdom.

I.

The Salt and its Savour.

"Ye are the salt of the earth."

1. Salt is one of those superfluities which the great French wit defined as "things that are very necessary." From the very beginning of human history men have set a high value upon it and sought for it in caves and by the seashore. The nation that had a good supply of it was counted rich. A bag of salt, among the barbarous tribes, was worth more than a man. The Jews prized it especially because they lived in a warm climate where food was difficult to keep, and because their religion laid particular emphasis on cleanliness, and because salt was largely used in their sacrifices.

¶ Both in Hebrew and in Roman bywords, salt is praised as a necessity of human life. Homer calls it "divine," and Plato speaks of it as a "substance dear to the gods." It is an indispensable element in the food both of men and of animals. It is so cheap and plentiful with us that we can hardly realize that there are places where there is what is known as salt starvation, which is in its way even more painful than hunger or thirst. A missionary tells us that in Africa he has known natives who have travelled fifty or sixty miles in search of salt. Their hot African blood, lacking the purifying and health-giving salt, has broken out in painful ulcers which drain the life and energy; and when the mission-house has been reached they have begged in piteous tones, not for money or bread, but for salt.[1]

¶ Chloride of sodium (common salt) is fortunately one of the most widely distributed, as well as one of the most useful and absolutely necessary, of nature's gifts; and it is a matter of much

[1] J. G. Mantle, *God's To-Morrow*, 22.

comfort to know that this mineral exists in such enormous quantities that it can never be exhausted. "Had not," says Dr. Buckland, "the beneficent providence of the Creator laid up these stores of salt within the bowels of the earth, the distance of inland countries from the sea would have rendered this article of prime and daily necessity unattainable to a large proportion of mankind; but under the existing dispensation, the presence of mineral salt, in strata which are dispersed generally over the interior of our continents and larger islands, is a source of health and daily enjoyment to the inhabitants of almost every region." Even supposing that the whole of the mines, brine pits, and springs become exhausted, we can fall back on the sea, whose supply is as boundless as its restless self; and there is as little fear of its exhaustion as there is of the failure of the sun's heat.[1]

2. From one point of view it was an immense compliment for the disciples to be spoken of as salt. Their Master showed great confidence in them. He set a high value upon them. The historian Livy could find nothing better to express his admiration for the people of ancient Greece than this very phrase. He called them *sal gentium*, "the salt of the nations." But our Lord was not simply paying compliments. He was giving a clear and powerful call to duty. His thought was not that His disciples should congratulate themselves on being better than any other men. He wished them to ask themselves whether they actually had in them the purpose and the power to make other men better. Did they intend to exercise a purifying, seasoning, saving influence in the world? Salt exists solely to purify, not itself, but that which needs its services. The usefulness of the Church as a separated society lies wholly in the very world from which it has been so carefully separated. It exists to redeem that world from itself. Out of love for that world it is sent by the same impulse of the Father as sent to it His only-begotten Son; and the damning error of the Pharisee is that he arrests this Divine intention in mid career, arrests it at the point where it has reached him, arrests it for his own honour and his own benefit, refusing to let it pass through him to its work on others.

(1) Salt is most largely used as an antiseptic, for allaying corruption, and for stopping the effects of climate upon animal matter; it is a preservative of sweetness and purity in that with

[1] W. Coles-Finch, *Water: its Origin and Use*, 167.

which it is associated. So the presence of Christ's Church in the world, of a Christian man or woman in the smaller world of his or her own circle in society, is to be *preservative*: to allay corruption, to maintain life, to ward off decay and death, to uphold a standard of right, without which the world would be a far worse place than it is.

¶ "Ye"—Christians, ye that are lowly, serious, and meek; ye that hunger after righteousness, that love God and man, that do good to all, and therefore suffer evil—"ye are the salt of the earth." It is your very nature to season whatever is round about you. It is the nature of the Divine savour which is in you to spread to whatsoever you touch; to diffuse itself, on every side, to all those among whom you are. This is the great reason why the providence of God has so mingled you together with other men, that whatever grace you have received of God may through you be communicated to others; that every holy temper and word and work of yours may have an influence on them also. By this means a check will, in some measure, be given to the corruption which is in the world; and a small part, at least, saved from the general infection, and rendered holy and pure before God.[1]

(2) To put our Lord's comparison in its full relief, however, we must add the sacrificial use of salt in Hebrew worship as well as in the rites of heathen antiquity. No offering of cakes or vegetable produce was laid on Jehovah's altar saltless; perhaps this seasoning was added even to animal sacrifices; certainly it entered into the composition of the sacred incense. With all this in their minds, Jesus' audience could understand Him to mean no less than this, that His disciples were to act on society (Jewish society, of course, in the first place) as a moral preservative, keeping it from total decay, and fitting it to be an oblation, not distasteful, but acceptable, to Jehovah. The thought was far from a new one to the Hebrew mind. Remembering how the world before the flood perished because "all flesh had corrupted his way," except one salt particle too minute to preserve the mass; how ten men like Lot would have saved the cities of the lower Jordan; how it marked the extreme ripeness to destruction of the Israel of Ezekiel's day, that even these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, had they been in it, could have delivered "neither son

[1] John Wesley.

nor daughter"; no Jew could miss the point of our Lord's words to His Twelve around Him, "Ye are the salt of the land." When He spoke, the corruption of His nation was extreme, as His own sermons show us; and effete Judaism was fast ripening for its fall.

(3) Salt gives relish to what would otherwise be tasteless or unpleasant; and Christ's people are, if we may so speak, the relishing element in the world, which prevents it from being loathsome altogether to the Lord. So Lot was in the cities of the plain the one savour which made them even so long endurable. There was not much salt in Lot; but there was a little, there was a righteous soul that at least vexed itself because of the unrighteousness around it, if it did not do very much to arrest that unrighteousness. And because of Lot, God almost spared the place, would have spared it had there been only a few more like him, or had he been just a little truer than he was. Even so Christians are to be as salt to the earth, which, without them, would be in a manner loathsome, being so possessed with mean and base and ignoble souls.

¶ A king asked his three daughters how much they loved him. Two of them replied that they loved him better than all the gold and silver in the world. The youngest one said she loved him better than salt. The king was not pleased with her answer, as he thought salt was not very palatable. But the cook, overhearing the remark, put no salt in anything for breakfast next morning, and the meal was so insipid that the king could not enjoy it. He then saw the force of his daughter's remark. She loved him so well that nothing was good without him.[1]

(4) Salt does its work silently, inconspicuously, gradually. "Ye are the light of the world," says Christ in the next verse. Light is far-reaching and brilliant, flashing that it may be seen. That is one side of Christian work, the side that most of us like best, the conspicuous kind of it. But there is a very much humbler, and a very much more useful, kind of work that we have all to do. We shall never be the "light of the world," except on condition of being "the salt of the earth." We have to play the humble, inconspicuous, silent part of checking corruption by a pure example before we can aspire to play the other part of

[1] A. C. Dixon, *Through Night to Morning*, 197.

raying out light into the darkness, and so drawing men to Christ Himself.

¶ I was once travelling in an Oriental country, where life was squalid, women despised, and houses built of mud; and of a sudden, I came upon a village where all seemed changed. The houses had gardens before them and curtains in their windows; the children did not beg of the passer-by, but called out a friendly greeting. What had happened? I was fifty miles from a Christian mission-station, and this mission had been there for precisely fifty years. Slowly and patiently the influence had radiated at the rate of a mile a year, so that one could now for a space of fifty miles across that barren land perceive the salt of the Christian spirit, and could see the light of the Christian life shining as from a lighthouse fifty miles away. That was the work to which Jesus summoned the world,—not an ostentatious or revolutionary or dramatic work, but the work of the salt and of the light. The saying of Jesus is not for the self-satisfied or conspicuous, but for the discouraged and obscure. A man says to himself: "I cannot be a leader, a hero, or a scholar, but I can at least do the work of the salt and keep the life that is near to me from spoiling; I can at least do the work of the light so that the way of life shall not be wholly dark." Then, as he gives himself to this self-effacing service, he hears the great word: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," and answers gladly: "So then death worketh in us, but life in you."[1]

II.

The Salt without the Savour.

"If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"

1. Salt may lose its seasoning power. In Christ's era salt frequently reached the consumer in a very imperfect state, being largely mixed with earth. The salt which has lost its savour is simply the earthy residuum of such impure salt after the sodium chloride has been washed out. Blocks of salt were quarried on the shores of the Dead Sea and brought to Jerusalem, and a store of this rock-salt was kept by the Levites in the Temple to be used in the sacrifices. It was very impure—usually containing a large mixture of sand—and in moist weather the saline ingredient deliquesced and, trickling away, left the porous lump in its original

[1] F. G. Peabody, *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii. 53.

shape, but all its substance, all its "savour" gone. For food it was no longer fit seasoning. Cast on the altar it would no longer decrepitate and sparkle, and in flowers of flaming violet adorn and consume the offering. Even the farmer did not care to get it. The gritty, gravelly mass was good for nothing—only fit to be pounded and sprinkled on the slippery pavement, and trodden under the feet of men.

¶ I have often seen just such salt, and the identical disposition of it that our Lord has mentioned. A merchant of Sidon having farmed of the Government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over an immense quantity from the marshes of Cyprus—enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for at least twenty years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the Government out of some small percentage. Sixty-five houses in Jûne—Lady Stanhope's village—were rented and filled with salt. These houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the street, to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was "good for nothing." Similar magazines are common in Palestine, and have been from remote ages; and the sweeping out of the spoiled salt and casting it into the street are actions familiar to all men. Maundrell, who visited the lake at Jebbûl, tells us that he found salt there which had entirely "lost its savour," and the same abounds among the debris at Usdum, and in other localities of rock-salt at the south end of the Dead Sea. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the salt of this country, when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid, and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all; and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust —not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street. There is a sort of verbal verisimilitude in the manner in which our Lord alludes to the act—"it is cast out" and "trodden under foot"; so troublesome is this corrupted salt, that it is carefully swept up, carried forth, and thrown into the street. There is no place about the house, yard, or garden where it can be tolerated. No man will allow it to be thrown on to his field, and the only place for it is the street; and there it is cast, to be trodden under foot of men.[1]

[1] W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, chap. xxvi.

2. What is a saltless Christian? A saltless Christian is one who has gone back to the earthly, the worldly, the carnal. The heavenly element is no longer in the ascendant; the salt has lost its savour.

(1) One sign of deterioration is to be found in a lowered and attenuated ideal. Christ has little by little become almost a personal stranger. We do not seek His company, watch His eye, listen for His voice. The thought of Him does not send a thrill of joy into the heart. We have not renounced Him or consciously taken another Lord in His place. But we have lagged so far behind in the journey that He is quite out of our sight and reach. We can no more honestly say, as once we could say with a kind of rapture, "He is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." It is the inevitable result from this changed relationship to Christ that the cross has dropped from our back (we did not feel it drop, nor do we miss it now that it is gone); there is nothing in our lives, or activities, or general profession, that is irksome or troublesome, compelling sacrifice, and earning joy. The world is apparently neither worse nor better for us. Really it is worse. The candlestick is still in its place, the candle is still feebly burning, but in a moment it may go out, and then where shall we be?

¶ If you take a red-hot ball out of a furnace and lay it down upon a frosty moor, two processes will go on—the ball will lose heat and the surrounding atmosphere will gain it. There are two ways by which you equalize the temperature of a hotter and a colder body; the one is by the hot one getting cold, and the other is by the cold one getting hot. If you are not heating the world, the world is freezing you. Every man influences all men round him, and receives influences from them; and if there be not more exports than imports, if there be not more influences and mightier influences raying out from him than are coming into him, he is a poor creature, and at the mercy of circumstances. "Men must either be hammers or anvil";—must either give blows or receive them. I am afraid that a great many of us who call ourselves Christians get a great deal more harm from the world than we ever dream of doing good to it. Remember this, you are "the salt of the earth," and if you do not salt the world, the world will rot you.[1]

[1] A. Maclaren.

(2) Another sign of deterioration is a growing indifference to all great enterprise for Christ. Few things are more exhilarating, more invigorating, more uplifting, more solemnizing, than a mighty gathering of Christian people, met, let us say, for a great missionary anniversary, to hear the glad tidings of the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to return to their homes, stirred, joyful, thankful. The man whose heart is cold to all this, sceptical about it, indifferent to it, and who yet looks back on days when every word spoken, every blow struck, every triumph won for Jesus, was a joy which few things else equalled, has good reason for asking himself what has happened to him to make the growth of the Kingdom of Christ so small and dull and unattractive and commonplace a thing. The change is assuredly not in the purpose of Jesus, or in the value of the soul, or in the duty of the Church, which is His Body.

¶ If, as can be reasonably argued, the historian may trace an increasing deterioration in the moral worth of Alexander Borgia from the period when the influence of Cesare at the Vatican replaced that of Juan, the fact has its obvious explanation. Rodrigo Borgia was a man of extraordinary vitality, with unusual reserves of power for his years. His energies had found their chief outlet in keen interest in the functions of his office as he understood them. His sensual indulgences, however disreputable, were never the first preoccupation of his nature; they were rather the surplusage of a virile temperament to which such interests as art, letters, or building made no serious appeal. In any position but that of the Vicar of Christ his excesses would have passed unremarked. If they weakened, as they undoubtedly did, his spiritual authority, they had hitherto scarcely detracted from the respect due to his political capacity. But in proportion as he surrendered his initiative in affairs and shared the control of policy, of finance, and of ecclesiastical administration with Cesare, the less worthy elements of his nature asserted themselves more forcibly. It was inevitable that in such a man abdication of responsibility should have this result, till in the end Alexander became a thoroughly evil man; evil, in that under guise of natural affection, in reality through cowardice, he allowed his authority, both spiritual and political, to be shamelessly exploited. Thus knowingly and without resistance Rodrigo Borgia steadily yielded to the worst impulses of his nature.[1]

[1] W. H. Woodward, *Cesare Borgia*, 136.

3. When the salt has lost its savour it is good for nothing. There are some things, the chemist tells us, which, when they have lost their own peculiar form and utility, are still of some good, for they can be put to other and baser uses. But to what use can a dead Church be put? You may try to galvanize it into newness of life by artificial means, but, after all, it is nothing more than a corpse. All that can be truly said of such an attempt is that it was an interesting experiment. A mere profession of religion is either an embarrassment or, what is worse, a fatal delusion. This old world of ours has undergone many material changes during its existence, yet it has grown more and more beautiful, in spite of them, as the forces of evolution have unfolded themselves. But there is one change it could hardly survive as the habitation of man, and that is the lost consciousness of the presence and power of God with the people, or the loss of the sweetness and beauty of the Redeemer of men as revealed in the lives of those faithful souls who sincerely love Him. For the Church which has lost its savour there will come a day when men, overwhelmed by their disappointment, and maddened by their sense of its lost savour, will tear it to pieces, just as the enraged mob in Paris is said to have torn the fillet from Reason's brow and trampled it under their feet.

If the salt should lose its savour, if the regenerative force should die out of the Church—if there were a Church into which the spirit of the world had passed, a Church which had become assimilated by the world, a Church which had somehow learnt to speak the world's language and to justify the world's morality, and to echo the world's phrases, a Church which ate and drank at the world's table without the world becoming aware of any protest, or any discomfort, or any fear, a Church which, instead of awakening consciences, sent them to sleep, instead of exposing the world's plagues flattered them into excusing or forgetting them: in the name of God what use, or place, has such a Church on the face of the earth? Such a Church has falsified the first law of its existence. It has killed out the very conscience which it was created to sustain. It has destroyed the very power of remedy from sin which it alone held in charge. It has poisoned the wells of human hope. "If the very salt have lost its savour,

wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

¶ The really amazing thing is that such immense numbers of people have accepted Christianity in the world, and profess themselves Christians without the slightest doubt of their sincerity, who never regard the Christian principles at all. The chief aim, it would seem, of the Church has been not to preserve the original revelation, but to accommodate it to human instincts and desires. It seems to me to resemble the very quaint and simple old Breton legend, which relates how the Saviour sent the Apostles out to sell stale fish as fresh; and when they returned unsuccessful, He was angry with them, and said, "How shall I make you into fishers of men, if you cannot even persuade simple people to buy stale fish for fresh?" That is a very trenchant little allegory of ecclesiastical methods! And perhaps it is even so that it has come to pass that Christianity is in a sense a failure, or rather an unfulfilled hope, because it has made terms with the world, has become pompous and respectable and mundane and influential and combative, and has deliberately exalted civic duty above love.[1]

¶ Glanced over some lectures of Mr. Gore's on "The Mission of the Church." He tells a story of St. Thomas Aquinas which is new to me. The Pope said to him, as the bags full of the money of the faithful, who had crowded to the Jubilee, were carried past: "Peter could not say now, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "No," was the reply, "neither could he say, 'Arise, and walk!'"[2]

[1] A. C. Benson, *Joyous Gard*, 197.

[2] Sir M. E. Grant Duff, *Notes from a Diary, 1892–1895*, i. 138.

A Conservative Reformer.

LITERATURE.

Bellars (W.), *Our Inheritance*, 128.
Campbell (L.), *The Christian Ideal*, 236.
Chadwick (W. E.), *SocialRelationships*, 91.
Dawson (G.), *Three Books of God*, 58.
Drummond (R. J.), *Faith's Certainties*, 41.
Holland (H. S.), *Pleas and Claims*, 292.
Jones (J. C.), *Studies in the Gospel according to Matthew*, 111.
Lyttelton (E.), *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 125.
McAfee (C. B.), *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 55.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions* : St. Matthew i.–viii., 199.
Matheson (G.), *Rests by the River*, 147.
„ „ *Thoughts for Life's Journey*, 51.
Matthew (J.), *The Law of Jehovah*, 205.
Meyer (F. B.), *The Directory of the Devout Life*, 47.
Morison (J.), *A Practical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 67.
Owen (J. W.), *Some Australian Sermons*, 88.
Peabody (F. G.), *Mornings in the College Chapel*, i. 41.
Plummer (A.), *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 74.
Shuttleworth (H. C.), in *Lombard Street in Lent*, 199.
Smith (W. C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 52.
Southouse (A. J.), *Men of the Beatitudes*, 23.
Tait (A.), *The Charter of Christianity*, 129.
Thorne (H.), *Notable Sayings of the Great Teacher*, 54.
Watson (J.), *The Inspiration of Our Faith*, 147.
Wilson (J. M.), in *The Anglican Pulpit of To-Day*, 356.
British Weekly Pulpit, iii. 468 (A. F. Kirkpatrick).

A Conservative Reformer.

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.—Matt. v. 17.

Christ, the new Prophet and Teacher, has gone up upon the Mount and is about to speak to the people. He is sitting down to preach. The villages will be empty soon, for the news has gone abroad and great excitement has seized the people. What new thing will He tell them? What daring message is this Revolutionary about to give them? They throng the slopes; they hang upon His words; there is the silence of a great expectation upon the multitude. And Christ begins to preach. What is His subject? What is He saying?

Not a syllable about what they called religion, law, and Sabbath, and temple worship, and fasts; simply the Beatitudes, the inner virtues of the heart, the duty to show light. He moves the conscience of the people by bringing them straight into the presence of their Father. He recalls them to the consciousness of God, whom they are forgetting. His words move them as nothing had ever moved them before. They feel for an instant the pressure and the nearness of God Himself. At such a moment, in presence of a higher religion, what to them were law, and ceremonial, and priest? The murmur goes round that old things have passed away; it is a new world; away with remnants of exploded superstition and bygone forms of worship! It is to meet this inarticulate thought that Christ stops and says, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." There is to be entire continuity with the past.

With absolute decisiveness He states the purpose of His coming. He knows the meaning of His own work, which so few of us do, and it is safe to take His own account of what He intends, as we so seldom do. His opening declaration is singularly com-

posed of blended humility and majesty. Its humility lies in His placing Himself, as it were, in line with previous messengers, and representing Himself as carrying on the sequence of Divine revelation. It would not have been humble for anybody but Him to say that, but it was so for Him. Its majesty lies in His claim to "fulfil" all former utterances from God.

¶ My love of, and trust in, our Lord, after I had seen Him in a vision, began to grow, for my converse with Him was so continual. I saw that, though He was God, He was man also; that He is not surprised at the frailties of men, that He understands our miserable nature, liable to fall continually, because of the first sin, for the reparation of which He had come. I could speak to Him as to a friend, though He is my Lord. . . . O my Lord! O my King! who can describe Thy Majesty? It is impossible not to see that Thou art Thyself the great Ruler of all, that the beholding of Thy Majesty fills men with awe. But I am filled with greater awe, O my Lord, when I consider Thy humility, and the love Thou hast for such as I am. We can converse and speak with Thee about everything whenever we will; and when we lose our first fear and awe at the vision of Thy Majesty, we have a greater dread of offending Thee,—not arising out of the fear of punishment, O my Lord, for that is as nothing in comparison with the loss of Thee![1]

I.

Christ the Revolutionary.

After the multitude had heard those wonderful teachings contained in the Beatitudes, most of which were new and startling, one might well suppose that the question uppermost in every heart would be, Are those laws and institutions which have lasted for two thousand years now to undergo complete change—are they to be superseded by those precepts which we have now just heard propounded by this Great Teacher, who seems to be the Founder of an entirely new law; for what Jewish Rabbi ever gave utterance to such precepts as the proclaiming of blessedness to the poor in spirit, the meek, the humble, the mourning, the persecuted? In the text the Saviour corrects this view.

[1] *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus* (trans. by D. Lewis), 367.

1. "Think not," He says, "that I came to destroy." It is noticeable at once that Christ uses a word for "destroy" which seems to be merely an echo of some confused popular sayings about the Messiah. It is indeed not easy to state clearly what is meant by destroying a law or a set of laws, still less easy to say what would be the meaning of "destroying the prophets." Laws may no doubt be repealed, but it is not conceivable that any clear-headed man anticipated that the Messiah would repeal the Ten Commandments, or was going to forbid the Old Testament to be read. Strictly speaking, this is the only rational sense which attaches itself to the words. It is probable that Christ was here merely putting on one side a rough popular description of the rôle which He was supposed to be going to play.

¶ It is not obvious at first sight what Christ means by "fulfilling the law." He does not mean taking the written law as it stands, and literally obeying it. That is what He condemns, not as wrong, but as wholly inadequate. He means rather, starting with it as it stands, and bringing it on to completeness; working out the spirit of it; getting at the comprehensive principles which underlie the narrowness of that letter. These the Messiah sets forth as the essence of the revelation made by God through the Law and the Prophets. Through them He has revealed His will, and it is impossible that His Son should attempt to pull down or undo this revelation of the Father's will, or that His will, in the smallest particular, should fail of fulfilment. It is not the Law or the Prophets that Jesus proposes to abolish, but the traditional misinterpretations of these authorities. To destroy these misinterpretations is to open the way for the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets; and He thus substituted free development of spiritual character for servile obedience to oppressive rules.[1]

2. To destroy—that is the creed of the revolutionary. In the French Revolution, Robespierre and his confederates went so far as to obliterate the septennial division of time, insisting that the week should consist of ten rather than seven days. New names were affixed to the days, to the streets, and to the officials of the State. But it was not thus that Christ inaugurated His work. He answered the *thoughts* of His age, saying, "Think not that I came to destroy." Every "jot and tittle" of the ancient code was dear to Him. Jesus was no iconoclast.

[1] A. Plummer.

3. For there is nothing to be gained by destruction. There are men who think that the best means of heralding the new dawn is to fling a bomb into a crowd of harmless people. There are those who believe, with Bakunin, that the only way to regenerate society is to wipe it out by utter destruction, on the supposition that a new and better order will surely be evolved out of chaos. It never has been so, and it never can be so. Such methods can only delay the advance of progress. You can, indeed, cast out devils by Beelzebub. You cannot keep them out; only angels can do that. "His kingdom shall not stand"; for by fulfilment, not by destruction, the old passes into the new.

¶ Carlyle could not reverence Voltaire, but he could not hate him. How could he hate a man who had fought manfully against injustice in high places, and had himself many a time in private done kind and generous actions? To Carlyle, Voltaire was no apostle charged with any divine message of positive truth. Even in his crusade against what he believed to be false, Voltaire was not animated with a high and noble indignation. He was simply an instrument of destruction, enjoying his work with the pleasure of some mocking imp, yet preparing the way for the tremendous conflagration which was impending. In the earlier part of his career Carlyle sympathized with and expected more from the distinctive functions of revolution than he was able to do after longer experience. "I thought," he once said to me, "that it was the abolition of rubbish. I find it has been only the kindling of a dunghill. The dry straw on the outside burns off; but the huge damp rotting mass remains where it was."[1]

¶ "Think not (comp. iii. 9, x. 34) that I came to destroy the law or the prophets." Such an expression implies that Christ knew that there was danger of the Jews thinking so, and possibly that some had actually said this of Him. The Pharisees would be sure to say it. He disregarded the oral tradition, which they held to be equal in authority to the written Law; and He interpreted the written Law according to its spirit, and not, as they did, according to the rigid letter. Above all, He spoke as if He Himself were an authority, independent of the Law. Even some of His own followers may have been perplexed, and have thought that He proposed to supersede the Law. They might suppose "that it was the purpose of His mission simply to break down restraints, to lift from men's shoulders the duties which they felt as burdens. The law was full of commandments; the Prophets

[1] J. A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle, 1795–1835*, ii. 54.

were full of rebukes and warnings. Might not the mild new Rabbi be welcomed as one come to break down the Law and the Prophets, and so lead the way to less exacting ways of life? This is the delusion which our Lord set Himself to crush. The gospel of the Kingdom was not a gospel of indulgence" (Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 15). He was not a fanatical revolutionary, but a Divine Restorer and Reformer.[1]

II.

Christ the Conserver.

If Christ is not to destroy the law and the prophets, what then is He to do with this old faith of the Jews? How is He to treat this partial, this imperfect, faith which is already on the ground? He may do either of two things. He may destroy or He may preserve. With the most deliberate wisdom He chooses one method and rejects the other. To the conservative, Christ comes with reassurance.

1. Nothing of the old that is valuable or strong shall be lost. Examine the new, and we shall find the old at the heart of it. Study the channel where the new current is running and we shall find the water of the old channel there. That is a very suggestive fact; it appears everywhere. Study the real forward movement of thought and we shall find it true. There will always be petty disturbances, offshoots here and there which have no reference to the real advance of thought; they may cut loose from the old truth, but they are short-lived and passing. In the main movements, down the main stream, the old is never lost.

¶ An American missionary in Japan, Dr. S. L. Gulick, writes thus: "The Christian preacher should constantly take the ground that every good teaching in the native faith is a gift of God the Father of all men, and is a preparation for the coming of His fuller revelation in Jesus Christ. We should show our real and deep respect for the 'heathen' religions; we should take off our hats at their shrines, as we expect them to do in our churches. We should ever insist that Christianity does not come to destroy anything that is good or true in the native faiths, but rather to stimulate, to strengthen, and fulfil it—to give it life and real energy. The trouble with the native religions is not that they

[1] A. Plummer.

possess no truth, but that the truth they have is so mixed up with folly and superstition that it is lost; it has no power—no life-giving energy."[1]

2. Nothing is to be remitted—no rule of purity, no necessity of righteousness. How can it be, when we are brought, by entering this Kingdom, nearer to God, who must be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? No slackening of the spiritual code is possible, is conceivable. To suppose this is to mistake all the meaning of mercy, all the purpose of pardon. Let no one make such a disastrous blunder. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

¶ "Think not that I will dispense with any of the rules of morality, prescribed by Moses, and explained by the prophets," is Blair's rendering of this verse. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" (both the law and the prophets): "To fulfil," that is, to render full obedience to those great commandments (see ver. 19) which it is the pre-eminent aim of the Scriptures to inculcate and enforce. Jesus came to render this full obedience in His own person, and also to secure that it should be rendered increasingly, and ever increasingly, in the persons of His disciples, the subjects of His Kingdom. It is this latter idea that was prominently in His mind on the present occasion, as is evident from the 19th and 20th verses. He came, not to introduce licence and licentiousness into His Kingdom, but to establish holiness. Some expositors suppose that the word "fulfil" means to supplement or perfect; and they imagine that Christ is here referring to His legislative authority. But such an interpretation of the term is at variance with verses 18 and 19, and with its use in kindred passages, such as Rom. xiii. 8, Gal. v. 14. Theophylact, among other interpretations, says that Christ fulfilled the law as a painter fills up the sketch of his picture. But it is a different "full-filling" that is referred to. When commandments are addressed to us, they present, as it were, empty vessels of duty, which our obedience is to "fill full."[2]

3. The Old Testament is not as it were the scaffolding necessary for the erection of the Christian Church, needing to be taken down in order that the full symmetry and beauty of the building may be seen, and only to be had recourse to from time to time when repairs are needed. It is an integral part of the structure.

[1] *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission IV.*, 95.

[2] J. Morison.

Ye are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone." How could it be otherwise? we ask with reverence. It was God who spoke "through the prophets," it is God who speaks "in a Son." Every Divine word must be of eternal import. God's truth does not vary; there is no mutability of purpose in the eternal present of the Divine mind.

The Old Testament leads us up to Christ, and Christ takes it and puts it back into our hands as a completed whole. He bids us study it as "fulfilled in him," and "put ourselves to school with every part of it." The old lesson-book is not to be thrown away or kept as an archæological curiosity; it is to be re-studied in this fresh light of further knowledge.

¶ The πλήρωσις of the law and the prophets is their fulfilment by the re-establishment of their *absolute* meaning, so that now nothing more is wanting to what they ought to be in accordance with the Divine ideas which lie at the foundation of their commands. It is the perfect development of their ideal reality out of the positive form, in which the same is historically apprehended and limited. . . . Luther well says: "Christ is speaking of the *fulfilment*, and so deals with *doctrines*, in like manner as He calls '*destroying*' a not acting with works against the law, but a breaking off from the law with the *doctrine*." The fulfilling is "showing the right kernel and understanding, that they may learn what the law is and desires to have." The Apostle Paul worked quite in the sense of our passage; his writings are full of the fulfilment of the law in the sense in which Christ means it; and his doctrine of its abrogation refers only to its validity for justification to the exclusion of faith. Paul did not advance beyond this declaration, but he applied his right understanding boldly and freely, and in so doing the breaking up of the old form by the new spirit could not but necessarily begin, as Jesus Himself clearly recognized (cf. ix. 16; John iv. 21, 23 f.) and set forth to those who believed in His own person and His completed righteousness. But even in this self-representation of Christ the new principle is not severed from the Old Testament piety, but is the highest fulfilment of the latter, its anti-typical consummation, its realized ideal. Christianity itself is in so far a law.[1]

[1] H. A. W. Meyer.

III.

Christ the Fulfiller.

Continuity with the old is part of Christ's teaching. He came to conserve. But He came to do more than that—infinitely more than that. He came also to fulfil. "To fulfil." Do we not often limit the idea of "fulfilment" to what are called the typical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament, and regard the fulfilment as just the counterpart of the type or prediction, as the reality of which only the reflection had hitherto been visible? But "fulfilment" is far more than this. It is the completion of what was before imperfect; it is the realization of what was shadowy; it is the development of what was rudimentary; it is the union and reconciliation of what was isolated and disconnected; it is the full growth from the antecedent germ.

1. *Christ fulfilled the law.*—The law (*νόμος*) is not to be restricted here to the Decalogue; it is to be taken in its more extended signification as denoting the entire law. The moral law was an expression of the mind of God, of God's moral nature—a revelation, or rather expansion, of the law of nature which He originally wrote in the heart of man. Sin blinded men to such an extent that it was necessary to have the law promulgated; hence God wrote it on two tables of stone. And it stood as a public warning against sin, and as a standard of moral duty. It disclosed wants that it was incapable of satisfying, it aggravated the evil it could not heal; and, compelling men to see their own weakness, it taught them to look forward to One who would be capable of fulfilling all its demands. This is the "fulfilling" of which Christ speaks, the completion of that which for two thousand years had been imperfect and ineffectual. "Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets," says Bishop Wordsworth, "by obedience, by accomplishment of types, ceremonies, rites, and prophecies, and by explaining, spiritualizing, elevating, enlarging, and perfecting the moral law, by writing it on the heart, and by giving grace to obey it, as well as an example of obedience by taking away its curse; and by the doctrine of free justification

by faith in Himself, which the law prefigured and anticipated, but could not give."

Let us look shortly at three main ways in which Christ fulfilled the law.

(1) Christ fulfilled the law *by meeting its requirements.*—From first to last the life of our Lord was the fulfilment, in spirit and letter, of the ancient ritual. As a son of the law, He obeyed the initial rite of Judaism on the eighth day after birth, and there was no item of the law, even to the dots of the i's or the crossing of the t's, which He omitted or slurred. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. What could be only partially true of His Apostle was literally true of the Lord: as touching the righteousness which is of the law, He was found blameless. Our Lord fulfilled the ceremonial law and fulfilled the moral law, since He was Jesus Christ "the Righteous." He honoured the law by His obedience "even to death," atoning for its breach and violation by mankind, and giving, through His unknown sufferings an answer to its just dues and demands, such as could not have been afforded though the whole race had been mulcted to the uttermost farthing of penal consequences. His fulfilment, therefore, was not for Himself alone, but as the second Adam, the representative man, and for us all.

(2) Christ fulfilled the law *by spiritualizing it.*—Were we to enter a room in the early morning where a company were sitting or drowsing, with sickly hue, by the dull glimmer of candles, which never had given a sufficient light, and were now guttering, neglected, and burning down to the socket, we would not think we were destroying the light by flinging open the casement, and letting in the clear sunshine upon them. We would, on the contrary, feel that by this process alone could they get the full light which they needed. Now, much in the same way the Lord Jesus came into the world, and found there, as it were, the old seven-branched candlestick of the tabernacle still burning, though dim and low, for it was not well trimmed in those neglectful years; found there the old law of Moses, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, still recognized, though a good deal obscured by traditions; and what He did was to purify and spiritualize the law. He opened upon it the windows of His spirit, illumining its

every part, showing its perfection and comprehensiveness. Other teachers had taken the law, the law as it stood, and had so dealt with it as to present it in all its bareness and outwardness, its narrowness and burdensomeness; Jesus Christ took the same law, the law as it stood, but He so dealt with it as to present it in all its fulness and inwardness, its breadth and goodness.

(3) Christ fulfilled the law *by generalizing it.*—He broke down all class distinctions in morality. Heathenism divided mankind into two classes, the learned and the ignorant, and between these two it erected a high partition wall. These distinctions, though discountenanced in Jewish law, were admitted in Jewish practice. "This people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Christ boldly demolished the wall of partition built high and broad between the cultured and the illiterate. He entered the granary of Divine truth, took out the golden grain, and scattered it broadcast on the face of the common earth. The truths of the favoured few He made the common property of the uncultured many. He alone of all His contemporaries or predecessors perceived the intrinsic worth and vast possibilities of the human soul.

Christ also broke down all national distinctions in morality. The intense nationalism of the Jews in the time of the Saviour is proverbial; they surrounded sea and land to make one proselyte. Instead of trying to make Judaism commensurate with the world, they tried to make the world commensurate with Judaism. However, Jewish morality here, as in every other instance, was superior to contemporaneous pagan morality. Notwithstanding its intense nationalism, Judaism always inculcated kindness to strangers. "The stranger within thy gates"—the recurrence of that phrase in the Mosaic ethics lifts them above all other ancient ethics whatever. What Moses only began, Jesus Christ beautifully perfected. He made morality absolutely human. It is no longer Greek under obligation to Greek, but man under obligation to man. What the Greek poet only momentarily conceived, Jesus Christ has converted into a powerful element in modern civilization—"I also am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me."

¶ Jesus felt Himself called of God to a lot within the chosen people, because He was Himself the culmination of the revelation made to them in the past. As that revelation had been through a special nation, so it had to complete itself there. That He

Himself lived within the limits of Judaism was not a confession that He was merely the crown of a national or racial faith, but rather the vindication of the older religion as an inherent part of a world-revelation. It was not the lowering of His message to the particularism of the Jewish religion, but the elevation of the latter into a universal significance first fully revealed in Him. The problem which Jesus had to solve was not the destruction of Judaism, but its consummation, the liberation of its spiritual content from the restrictions of its form. That He should have indicated the supersession of Jewish privilege is not at all unlikely; but manifestly this could not be His usual or characteristic tone, if He were to implant in Jewish minds the germs of His wider faith. He had largely to put Himself in their place, and work through the forms of their thought. Primarily, therefore, His universalism *had* to be implicit. He did not so much give them new religious terms as fill the old terms with a new meaning and reference. Hence it was only after He had at least partly accomplished this in the case of a chosen circle of followers, and attached them unalterably to Himself, that He spoke openly and frequently of the larger issues of His gospel, and the ingathering of the "nations." Jesus saw that if He were to conserve the eternal element in the Jewish religion, He must work within its lines. He broke, indeed, with the existing authorities, but only because He maintained that they misrepresented it. The principle on which He acted, as regards both the teaching of His ministry and the subsequent development of His Church, was to sow germinal truths which could come to maturity only through the reaction of individual thought, and the enlarging of experience. Therefore, while He did not leave the disciples wholly without plain announcements of the universality of His mission, He did not so emphasize this as to impair their confidence in the unity and continuity of the old and the new faiths.[1]

2. *Christ fulfilled the prophets.*—We are familiar with the idea of the "fulfilment" of prophecy, though that idea is often unduly limited. Prophecy is not "inverted history": it was not a reflection beforehand by which men could foreknow what was to come: it was but as the seed out of which plant and flower and fruit were to be developed. Prophecy kept men's eyes fixed upon the future; it created a sense of need, it stirred deep and earnest longings; it stimulated hope. And then the fulfilment gathered

[1] D. W. Forrest, *The Christ of History and of Experience*, 418.

into one unimagined reality all the various lines of thought and longing and hope, in a completeness far transcending all anticipation. The fulfilment could not have been conjectured from the prophecy, but it answers to it, and shows the working of the one Divine purpose, unhasting, unresting, to its final goal of man's redemption.

The prophets' great teachings were all centred round the figure of the Deliverer of the future. There were three things concerning the person and work of this Messiah upon which they laid special emphasis.

(1) The Messiah was to be *humble in the circumstances of His life.*—His birthplace, His lowly outward condition, His having no visible grandeur to attract the world's eye, had all been noted by the pen of inspiration. If He had been born in any other place than Bethlehem, if He had appeared as a rich Prince instead of being the son of a poor family, there would have been reason to say that the words of Scripture were against Him; for it was prophesied regarding Him, "Thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

¶ Christian religion beginneth not at the highest, as other religions do, but at the lowest. It will have us to climb up by Jacob's ladder, whereupon God Himself leaneth, whose feet touch the very earth, hard by the head of Jacob. Run straight to the manger, and embrace this Infant, the Virgin's little babe, in thine arms; and behold Him as He was born, nursed, grew up, was conversant amongst men; teaching; dying; rising again; ascending up above all the heavens, and having power over all things. This sight and contemplation will keep thee in the right way, that thou mayest follow whither Christ hath gone.[1]

(2) But the Messiah was to be *great in His person.*—He was to be of high origin, though He was to take up a lowly position on earth. It was said of Him by one of the prophets, His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." These words intimated that He who was afterwards to appear in human nature for the deliverance of His people had lived from the beginning, from eternity. The prophet Isaiah had also said with reference to Him, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is

[1] Luther, *Commentary on the Galatians*, 102.

given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

¶ The Jews took great offence, we read, because Jesus, being a man, called Himself the Son of God. But did not the Scriptures, which they professed to follow, speak of the Messiah as both God and man? If He had claimed less He would not have been the Deliverer promised to their fathers. And were the actions of Jesus inconsistent with His high claim? When He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, and life to the dead by a word, did He not show that He indeed was what the prophet Isaiah had said the Messiah at His coming should be, "The Mighty God"?[1]

(3) He was also *to accomplish a matchless work*.—He was to bruise the head of the serpent; or, as this first announcement is explained again and again in the prophecies which follow, and particularly in the prophecies of Daniel, He was "to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." He was to take away the sins of men which separated them from God, to put an end to the commission of sin, and to bring in the reign of righteousness for ever. He was in consequence called by the prophets in other places "the Lord our righteousness." Jesus declared when He was upon the earth that this was to be the great purpose of His mission. "The Son of man," He said, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He came to take away all burdens and all troubles by taking away sin, which is the cause of them all. "Come unto me," He said, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And with reference to all that come unto Him, He says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

¶ In St. Paul, Christ is the Deliverer from sins in the past; He is the Defender against sins in the future. God's love in Christ is emphatically that which delivers the wretched man, beaten in all his endeavours to free himself from the body of this death of sin: it is that which has done through Christ what the law could not do, enabled the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled in His redeemed. Over St. Paul's mind there ever seems to

[1] G. S. Smith, *Victory Over Sin and Death*, 21.

be resting the shadow of the memory of the past; he remembers how wrong he once went, what a terrible mistake he made. And he remembers how, not by any reflection, not by any study of his own, but by the direct influence of Christ Himself, he first learned how fearfully wrong he was. Hence throughout his life there is present to him a sense of his own weakness. Yet while these thoughts sometimes come across him, and make him more eagerly watchful over all that he does, nothing can shake his firm persuasion that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." To him Christ is emphatically the power which wipes out the past, and which upholds the soul, the power which alone can preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness, who shall one day "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."[1]

[1] Archbishop Temple.

The Lord's Prayer.

Literature.

Aked (C. F.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Cohu (J. R.), *Our Father.*
Dearmer (P.), in *Churchmanship and Labour*, 226.
Dods (M.), *The Prayer that Teaches to Pray.*
Eyton (R.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Farrar (F. W.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Gibbon (J. M.), *The Disciples' Prayer.*
Gore (C.), *Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*, 30.
Goulburn (E. M.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Hall (N.), *The Lord's Prayer: A Practical Meditation.*
Hare (A. W.), *Sermons on the Lord's Prayer.*
Jones (J. D.), *The Model Prayer.*
Jones (R. M.), *The Double Search*, 94.
Jowett (B.), *Sermons on Faith and Doctrine*, 250.
Lowrie (W.), *Abba, Father.*
McFadyen (J. E.), *The Prayers of the Bible*, 132.
Maurice (F. D.), *The Prayer-Book and the Lord's Prayer.*
Miller (J. R.), *The Golden Gate of Prayer.*
Milligan (G.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Richards (W. R.), *A Study of the Lord's Prayer.*
Roberts (J. E.), *Studies in the Lord's Prayer.*
Ross (C. B.), *Our Father's Kingdom.*
Ross (G. A. J.), *The Universality of Jesus*, 129.
Ruskin (J.), *The Lord's Prayer and the Church.*
Saphir (A.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Schenck (F. S.), *The Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.*
Stanford (C.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Stubbs (C. W.), *The Social Teaching of the Lord's Prayer.*
Vaughan (C. J.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Waddy (J. T.), *The Lord's Prayer.*
Watt (L. M.), *God's Altar Stairs.*
Wells (J.), *The Children's Prayer.*
Wilberforce (B.), *Sanctification by the Truth*, 189.
Wordsworth (E.), *Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer.*
Worlledge (A. J.), *Prayer*, 160.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

After this manner therefore pray ye.—Matt. vi. 9.

1. THE Lord's Prayer has been the type of prayer among Christians in all ages. Throughout the Christian centuries men have poured forth their hearts to God in these few words, which have probably had a greater influence on the world than all the writings of theologians put together. They are the simplest form of communion with Christ: when we utter them we are one with Him; His thoughts become our thoughts, and we draw near to God through Him. They are also the simplest form of communion with our fellow-men, in which we acknowledge that He is our common Father and that we are His children. And the least particulars of our lives admit of being ranged under one or other of the petitions which we offer up to Him.

2. It has not only become the one universal prayer of Christendom; it has appealed to and has been adopted by the most enlightened exponents of other faiths. This result is all the more astounding if, as some scholars have declared, no single petition of the prayer was in the strict sense "original," the startling originality being in the structure of the prayer. Within the narrow framework of an utterance containing only petitions, Jesus has gathered all the deepest necessities of the collective and of the individual life of mankind, and has so knit together and built up these petitions in orderly sequence that the prayer as a whole appeals to men everywhere, and remains to any man who will thoughtfully use it a liberal education in sympathy with mankind and in understanding the character of God.

¶ In his "Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude," Thomas Gray endeavoured to impress on an age of indifference the priceless value of the daily earthly blessings which we receive,

too often without a thought of their beauty, and healthfulness, and joy, without a word of gratitude to Him who gives and sustains, without one real expression of prayer that we may consecrate them more entirely to His service. He describes the feelings of one who, after a long and painful illness, finds himself at last able to leave his room, and move once more amid familiar sights and sounds which, in a normal state of health, scarcely excite attention:

> See the Wretch, that long has tost
> On the stormy bed of Pain,
> At length repair his vigour lost
> And breathe and walk again;
> The meanest flowret of the vale,
> The simplest note that swells the gale,
> The common Sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening Paradise.

In the spiritual world there are blessings like "the common sun, the air, the skies," the priceless value of which in regard to communion with God in Christ, the conscious sense of the Divine presence, the formation of character, and control of conduct, we for the most part hardly estimate until we find ourselves deprived of them, or unable to make use of them. Among such blessings, inestimable, yet taken as a matter of course, is the gift of the Lord's Prayer.[1]

(1) To begin with, a man is bidden postpone the outpouring of his private needs till he has related himself aright to the needs of the world: the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer are "missionary" intercessions, which, when a man begins to use, at once narrowness and possible selfishness of outlook are checked, and the sympathies spread out to take in the wants that lie deepest in the life of universal man. "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name"—hallowed, that is, the whole world over. What a sweep of intercessory affection, what enlightening recollection of what the world most truly needs, what readjustment to fraternal fellowship of desire lies behind the intelligent use of this petition alone! It means that one sees, instructed by Christ, that the profoundest necessity for the broken and sundered lives of our race is reunion in spiritual religion, in one universal reverence to one worthy thought of God; and to go on intelligently to pray, "Thy kingdom come:

[1] A. J. Worlledge, *Prayer*, 160.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is to desire (and surely also to be moved to work for) the reorganizing of man's broken life on the basis of a universal subordination to God, orderly and loyal, because willing, enlightened, and free. Think of the power that lies in a series of intercessions like that *to educate the intercessor* in the true meaning and inwardness of the history behind him and being made around him! Think of its stores of impulse to a cosmopolitan outlook, its potent force as a solvent of the parochial spirit! And then think of the range and depth of the insight of the "Galilæan peasant" who thus perceived and read the universal needs of man! How came He to have those eyes which, like the eyes of God, "are over all the earth"?

¶ In each petition we ask to be blessed with God Himself. In each petition we therefore see the Trinity, while one Person of the Trinity is more prominently brought forward. The name is the Son revealing the *Father*; the kingdom is the Father beheld and loved in the *Son*; the will renewed is the *Holy Ghost* fulfilling in us what the Father ordains and Christ mediates. In these three petitions there is no sequence—they are co-equal, co-ordinate—hence there is no conjunction.[1]

(2) The remaining four petitions of the prayer are no less marvellous as a transcript of the cry of the world-wide heart of man. "Give us this day our daily bread"—*give* us, for we can neither manufacture nor for very long so much as store the raw material of life's nourishment. "Forgive us our debts"—*forgive*, for we can neither pay for, expiate, nor endure unexpiated, the irreparable past. "Lead us not into temptation"—for life is beset with risk as well as opportunity. "Deliver us from evil"—for that is the deep-set root of all woes. Is it not the unanimous voice of mankind that sighs through these petitions? Has there ever been so perfect, so adequate an articulation of the murmur of the hungering world-soul? Is prayer for more than this prayer includes essential? Would prayer for less be less than vicious? Men vary in their power of calling up from the subconscious region the thoughts and sympathies that wander to the farthest frontiers of personality and seem to travel even beyond; but this is more than telepathy *in excelsis*: it is a

[1] Adolph Saphir, *The Lord's Prayer*, 58.

knowledge of universal man gathering itself in such a way within the compass of a single mind that the inference is irresistible that this Man's consciousness was more than "individual," and that these things He had learned in some residence in God antedating His residence on earth. The vast sweep of the Lord's Prayer, and its astounding grasp of what is deepest in the necessities of the world in every age, go far to make credible even the saying attributed to Christ in the Fourth Gospel, "Before Abraham was, I am."

¶ Of symbolical numbers in Scripture, there are none whose meaning is so certain and obvious as the numbers three, four, and seven. Three is the number of God, as in the threefold blessing which the high priest pronounced, the threefold "holy" in the song of the seraphim, and in various passages. The mystery, most clearly expressed in the institution of baptism and throughout the Epistles, is contained in germ in all the manifestations of God unto His people. The number four is evidently the number of the world, of the manifold mundane relationship of creation in its fulness and variety. This symbolism finds its expression in nature—the four directions in space, the four corners of the earth, the four winds, from which all the elect shall be gathered. It is to be noticed in the Tabernacle, the measures, curtains, colours, and ingredients, where it denotes regularity and completeness. With this correspond the facts that we have a fourfold account of the life of Christ, and that the creaturely life and perfection is represented by the four living Beings. Seven is the number symbolizing God manifesting Himself in the world. From the very first chapter of Genesis to the closing Book of the inspired record, this number is invested with a special dignity and solemnity. The seventh day is not merely the day of rest, but the day on which are *completed and perfected the works of God.* Seven is the number of clean animals which Noah was commanded to bring into the Ark. Seven branches had the golden candlestick in the holy place of the Tabernacle; seven days lasted the great festivals in Israel; on seven pillars was built the House of Wisdom; walking amid seven golden candlesticks Jesus is represented in the Apocalypse; seven spirits are before the throne; seven words the Saviour uttered from the cross; seven petitions He gives to His people.[1]

[1] Adolph Saphir, *The Lord's Prayer*, 59.

THE FATHER.

"Our Father which art in heaven."

"After this manner therefore pray ye." This then is the right way of praying. Our Lord here in the Sermon on the Mount is telling men how to do the three eminent duties—"When thou doest alms," "When ye fast," "When ye pray." About each of the three He has the same thing to say—Do not advertise it; but when He speaks of prayer He goes further, for it is by far the most difficult of the three; He goes on to tell us the right method. "After this manner therefore pray ye." The Lord's Prayer is given, not to tie us down to that particular form of words (though, indeed, there are none so good), but to show us *how* to pray. "After this manner." This is the right way.

1. Too often man trips in and out of God's presence, saying words that he does not feel towards a Person of whom he has no intelligent conception. But we must not do so. Our love and our awe must be first evoked. "Father," we approach Him as a child in the tenderest relationship; He is One who loves us with more than human love, loves us more than we can love Him, One who is more ready to hear than we are to pray.

¶ Father! It is the greatest word on mortal tongue, and the truth of the universal Fatherhood of God is the greatest which ever dawned on the intelligence of man. But did it ever dawn upon the intelligence of man in such a way as the other truths have done? When Peter made his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," our Lord answered him in joy and thankfulness, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." May we not say that flesh and blood never revealed this truth of God's eternal Fatherhood? It is God's own direct supreme revelation of Himself in Christ His eternal Son.[1]

¶ No exercise of will can procure for me, and no amount of demerit can forfeit for me, the fact, the existence, of a sonship and a Fatherhood. Even in the far country, where the prodigal son is feeding swine, not memory alone, but consciousness, recognizes a relationship between himself and a far-off person, whom he confidently calls his father. And when he forms the

[1] C. F. Aked, *The Lord's Prayer*, 14.

resolution to escape from his misery and his destitution, and to seek again the land and the home which for years have been to him but a dream and an illusion, he frames into words, without a doubt or a peradventure, the confession with which he will present himself at the door of that house and that heart, and it begins with the assertion of an inalienable relationship—"I will say to him, Father!"[1]

2. The Lord's Prayer bids us lay aside all selfishness at the outset. Its first word—"Our"—is the most difficult of all; for to lay aside selfishness is the hardest thing in the world. We must begin by casting off self, by realizing that we are only one minute unit in the great millions of humanity. Think of it, what this word "our" means—all those who are separated from us by impassable barriers, those who are so far above us that we cannot reach them, those who are so far beneath us that we reckon the slightest act of human recognition is a gracious condescension, all those who belong to the opposite faction in politics, those who belong to hostile nations, those whose religion or whose irreligion wars with our deepest convictions; all those who are outcasts too, and criminals, the enemies of society, and those—it is often hardest to remember—with whom we have had disagreements, quarrels, those whom we feel we *cannot* like. He is our Father only in connexion with these others also. We cannot speak for ourselves unless we speak also for them; we cannot carry our petitions to the throne of His grace unless we carry theirs; we cannot ask for any good unless it is for them as much as for us. For He is their Father as much as ours, and we cannot say, "Our Father which art in heaven," unless we have first learnt to say, "Our brothers who are on the earth."

¶ The Lord's Prayer is the simplest of all prayers, and also the deepest. We are children addressing a Father who is also the Lord of heaven and earth. In Him all the families of the earth become one family. The past as well as the present, the dead as well as the living, are embraced by His love. When we draw near to Him we draw nearer also to our fellow-men. From the smaller family to which we are bound by ties of relationship we extend our thoughts to that larger family which lives in His presence. When we say, "Our Father," we do not mean that God is the Father of us in particular, but of the whole human race,

[1] C. J. Vaughan, *The Lord's Prayer*, 15.

the great family in heaven and earth. The Heavenly Father is not like the earthly; yet through this image we attain a nearer notion of God than through any other. We mean that He loves us, that He educates us and all mankind, that He provides laws for us, that He receives us like the prodigal in the parable when we go astray. We mean that His is the nature which we most revere, with a mixed feeling of awe and of love; that He knows what is for our good far better than we know ourselves, and is able to do for us above all that we can ask or think. We mean that in His hands we are children, whose wish and pleasure is to do His will, whose duty is to trust in Him in all the accidents of their lives.[1]

¶ It is in every line a prayer of fellowship and co-operation. It is a perfect illustration of the social nature of prayer. The co-operation and fellowship are not here confined, and they never are except in the lower stages, to the inward communion of an individual and his God. There is no *I* or *me* or *mine* in the whole prayer. The person who prays spiritually is enmeshed in a *living group*, and the reality of his vital union with persons like himself clarifies his vision of that deeper Reality to whom he prays. Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood are born together. To say "Father" to God involves saying "brother" to one's fellows, and the ground swell of either relationship naturally carries the other with it, for no one can largely realize the significance of brotherly love without going to Him in whom love is completed.[2]

3. Yet again, it is to the Father in heaven that we are to pray. Mankind before Christ sought two ways of knowing God. The philosopher thought of Him as far removed from earth in His perfection. The polytheist thought of Him as embodied in many gods, half-human, and for that reason very near to him. The one protested against the error of the other, and both were half-true. God *is* infinitely above us, as the philosopher thought; but He is also very human, very near. So Jesus Christ came to show us that God is not some vast abstraction, but is a present Father, closer to us than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

For God is never so far off
As even to be near.
He is within. Our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.

[1] Benjamin Jowett, *Sermons on Faith and Doctrine*, 252.
[2] R. M. Jones, *The Double Search*, 65.

To think of Him as by our side
  Is almost as untrue
As to remove His shrine beyond
  Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself
  Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth,
  Myself God's sanctuary.

4. "In heaven" does not mean at a distance. What does it mean? It means perfection. "Our Father in heaven" suggests perfection in love, in helpfulness, in homeliness.

(1) *Perfection in love.*—We can learn heavenly things only from earthly types. Looking at such types, what is our idea of what a Father should be? At least we understand that the word represents *love*—love that thinks, love that works; the love of one who is wise, who is strong, and who takes trouble. It means this in man, it means this in God, and to perfection.

(2) *Perfection in helpfulness.*—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" That word "if" seems meant not only to imply an argument, but to suggest a question. "*If* ye . . . know how!" Do fathers and mothers always know? Look at Hagar, when the bread was gone, the water spent, and Ishmael ready to die of want—did *she* know? "She cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept." Look at certain times into certain houses not far from your own, and you might hear a child ask for bread, and then hear the father say, "There is none." He would help, but he does not know how. God, as our helper, because He is our Father in heaven, might say to us, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so"—in helping you—"are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

(3) *Perfection in homeliness.*—The words, "Our Father which art in heaven," suggest to us the perfection of our home. Although the word "heaven" is here used mainly to remind us of our Father's perfection, it is meant also to remind us of the

family home. Some Christians seem not to care for this doctrine, and in giving us their own views they are almost as refined as Confucius, who said, "Heaven is Principle." Our notion, although it includes this idea, does not stop at it. It includes not only character but condition, not only principle but place. We look upon heaven as the perfect home of perfect human nature.

¶ What must that place be in which even God is at home! We cannot tell, and it is astonishing that any mortal has ever tried to tell. It is written in an old story that an artist, led by Indians, once went to paint Niagara, but that when he saw it, he dashed his disappointing pencil down the precipice, for he felt that he could as soon paint the *roar*, as the fall, the foam, the great sheets of light, the arch of coloured rays, with all the other wonders that went to make up the surprising cataract; and shall we who have only seen earth, try to picture heaven! No! poems of glory, pictures of magnificence, all fail, "imagination in its utmost stretch, in wonder dies away"; in our present state, our future state is a mystery, though a mystery of delight. It is our home, but the celestial homeliness is beyond us now.[1]

I.

The Name.

"Hallowed be thy name."

This is no doxology. It is a prayer. It is the first of three prayers concerning God Himself.

1. What is a "name"? What is it for us? A name is the brief summary of a person. The use of a name, the object of each man having a name, is to supersede the necessity of interminable descriptions, and to set before us, by a sort of telegraphic dispatch, the whole person—face, form, and properties—of him whom we know and of whom we would make mention. The "name" is the catchword which renders amplification needless by bringing up to us the person—figure and qualities and characteristics in one. The name is the man. The absent, distant, inaccessible man is made present to us in the naming of the name.

[1] C. Stanford, *The Lord's Prayer*, 81.

Even thus is it with the name of God. When Moses prayed, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory"—and when he was told that to see the Face of God was impossible, but that he might be privileged to behold some sort of back look and (as it were) retrospect of His Person—we read next that the Lord descended, passed by before him, and, in answer to that prayer for a sight of His glory, proclaimed the name of the Lord. Now what was that name? Was it the "Jehovah," the "I Am," of the original revelation? Read it as it lies there at length in the 34th chapter of the Book of Exodus, and you will see that the name of God is, in other words, the sum of God's attributes, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." God, such as He is, in mercy and righteousness, in boundless compassion and just judgment—that, that is His "name."

2. Learning what God is, we ask that His name may be hallowed or held sacred, regarded by all as a true and holy thing that is at any cost to be maintained in esteem, and under all temptation still believed in. May the idea of God which He would have us to possess be held as the choice possession of our spirits, the treasure on which our hearts rest, and to which they ever return; may it be held separate from all contamination of our own thoughts about God; and may it never be obscured by any cloud of adversity tempting us to think that God has changed, never lost sight of by any careless devotion of our thoughts to other objects and names; never presumed upon nor polluted as countenancing folly or sin, but cherished still and guarded as "the holy and reverend name of the Lord."

¶ It is to be noted that this petition stands first of all the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. It is the very first thing that a disciple thinks of as he begins to pray, indicating what must be our first business on the first day of every week—to hallow God's name. Nothing else is to take precedence of that. Other things may follow. Before the day is over it will be right to offer a prayer for daily bread, but that can wait till later. Even the prayer for forgiveness of our sins comes later, and the prayer for deliverance from temptation comes later. In Christ's order

earliest of all stands this petition that the name of God our Father may be hallowed.[1]

II.

The Kingdom.

"Thy kingdom come."

What is a kingdom? It is a society of men living in an orderly manner a common life under one head or ruler. The Kingdom of God is this, but more. For human rule is over men only, speaking generally; the rule of God is over all created things. Thus the Kingdom of God is an orderly constitution of all things visible and invisible, inanimate, animate and spiritual, each in its own place fulfilling the Divine will.

1. Now this idea of the Kingdom is taken for granted when we pray "Thy kingdom come." The necessity for this prayer arises only because the rule of God in the world has been—not indeed banished, but—obscured. So that from the point of view of sinful, alienated man, the Kingdom of God, His manifested rule, must be treated as an absent thing to be desired and invoked.

2. This is by no means to be limited to the desire that God's sovereignty should be established over our hearts. The prayer is put into the mouth of disciples, who have already surrendered their hearts and wills to God. "Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom"; and the Kingdom of God is only Christ's name for the blessings of the gospel. Therefore this petition means: Let thy gospel have world-wide supremacy, and the conceptions of God and of life which it teaches govern everywhere. It means that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, through the acceptance and application of Christian teachings; and that the name of God which is to be hallowed is that revealed by Jesus Christ.

¶ I am prepared to adopt the following declaration: "The coming of the kingdom would mean the death of flunkeyism and

[1] W. R. Richards, *A Study of the Lord's Prayer*, 45.

toadyism in the personal life, the death of mammon in the social life, and the death of jingoism in the national life." I venture to think that it would banish from our social life all strife, all envy, all slander. It forbids Christian people to follow unchristian fashions. It makes the pride and stand-offishness of some Christians towards their fellow-members positively ridiculous. It bids us be courteous, kindly affectioned, pitiful, given to hospitality, charitable. The same consecrating hand laid upon our commercial life will prevent the fierce competition which chokes the life out of the weak and exalts the strong; a heartless rejection of a good servant because a few shillings a week can be saved by giving the post to a boy: a recognition of a moral code differing fundamentally from Jesus Christ's moral code. Business men will give a helping hand to fallen brothers who are trying to recover themselves; they will scorn to ask their young clerks to make untrue statements about goods. Workmen will lose their passion for strikes. Christian people—certainly Christian ministers—will be ashamed to take shares in a brewery "because it pays," or to demand a larger dividend from any company without enquiring what the effect may be on the employees. In civic and political life we shall refuse to allow large vested interests to occupy the seat of authority and to shape legislation for their own advantage. When the Kingdom comes, no Parliament would allow the children's charter—a Bill for preventing the sale of intoxicants to young children, a Bill the necessity for which was recognized by everybody—to be flung to the brewers and publicans for them to tear and trample upon. Indeed, we might go a step farther back, and say that when the Kingdom comes there will be no liquor traffic on lines that bear any comparison with that which shocks and mocks and murders us to-day. And in our national life when this prayer is prayed earnestly, we shall distinguish between the shoddy patriotism which is only a masked pagan vice, which desires to exalt British interests by any means warlike or not at the expense of other people, and that truer patriotism which is a Christian virtue, which longs to make one's own nation good, that it may be blessed of God and become a means of blessing to the world. You may easily quarrel with my provisional programme of Christian life, but you cannot be a true follower of Christ if you do not pray and labour for the coming of the Kingdom of our Father, through the spread of the Christian religion and the supremacy of the teaching of Jesus.[1]

Father, let Thy kingdom come,—
Let it come with living power;

[1] J. E. Roberts, *Studies in the Lord's Prayer*, 29.

Speak at length the final word,
Usher in the triumph hour.

As it came in days of old,
In the deepest hearts of men,
When Thy martyrs died for Thee,
Let it come, O God, again.

Tyrant thrones and idol shrines,
Let them from their place be hurled:
Enter on Thy better reign,
Wear the crown of this poor world.

O what long, sad years have gone,
Since Thy Church was taught this prayer!
O what eyes have watched and wept
For the dawning everywhere.

Break, triumphant day of God!
Break at last, our hearts to cheer;
Eager souls and holy songs
Wait to hail Thy dawning here.

Empires, temples, sceptres, thrones,
May they all for God be won;
And, in every human heart,
Father, let Thy kingdom come.[1]

III.

The Will.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

In the second petition of this prayer, we have prayed for God's spiritual Kingdom, that it may be set up and established in our hearts; for His visible Kingdom, or Church, that it may increase and spread, until it fill the whole earth; and for His heavenly Kingdom, that it may soon drive away and put an end to every kind of sin and sorrow, and leave nothing to be seen in the new heavens and the new earth but a glorious God, filling all things with His presence, and ruling with a Father's love over His dutiful and

[1] John Page Hopps.

holy children. Already, therefore, we have desired that those things be fulfilled which are contained in this third petition. We cannot desire that He be King over the earth, without desiring that His will be done on earth. We do not sincerely own Him as King, unless we set His will above our own and every other. For a kingdom where there is not one guiding will is a distracted kingdom, doomed to fall: a king whose will is not done is a mocked and virtually dethroned king. However, to add this petition is not to repeat, though it be to develop and follow out, the preceding. The three petitions are to one another as root, stem, and fruit; as beginning, middle, and end.

It is not enough that the Kingdom be established, that its boundaries be enlarged, and its glory delighted in; there is an end for which all this is brought about, and that end is that the will of the Ruler may be done. We desire that God may assert His dominion over us and all men, and may give us to know that He is a living and near God by the force of His will upon us. From the "name" we pass to the work as displayed in His Kingdom, and from the work to the will. From the outskirts of His personality we pass to its heart.

1. The petition, "Thy will be done," is not only the summit or the climax of those petitions in which we seek God's honour and glory; it is *the foundation of all prayer*. For what is prayer? It is not, as is sometimes foolishly thought, a mere means of trying to extort something from God; nor an attempt to change the will of God regarding us, as if, by our continual asking, we might obtain certain things which God had hitherto denied us. It is, first of all and chief of all, an acknowledgment on our part that God knows what is best for us, and a desire that He would enable us to submit our wills to His will. We cannot rightly ask for anything, unless we ask for it in humble dependence upon the will of God; unless, in asking, we are conscious that we do not desire it, unless God desires it for us.

2. "Thy will be done,"—that, then, is the spirit of every true prayer. But it is more, it ought to be *the spirit of every true life*. Apart from such acknowledgment as is here implied, how aimless our lives are apt to be, swayed hither and thither by every idle

impulse, at the mercy of every gust of passion, or at the best centred in some selfish or worldly pursuit. But, on the other hand, once a man has realized that he has come forth from God, that God has need of him, and has a purpose for him to fulfil, what new strength and dignity of character he gains! He learns that he does not stand alone, and gradually there is borne in upon him the triumphant consciousness of a life lived, not according to any self-willed object or desire, but step by step unfolding itself according to "the complete and perfect plan cherished for it in the heart of God." With the Hebrew Psalmist he can exclaim, "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust." "My times are in thy hand."

3. God's will is to be done *here*—here on earth—and *now*. We are not to wait for another life, as if then alone we could truly serve God. But our service here is to prepare us for our service hereafter. We are told of the angels of God that they "do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word," and that they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And the ministry of the angels is, as this petition teaches us, to be the model of our ministry.

¶ When Hooker was lying on his deathbed, a friend visiting him found him in deep contemplation, and asking what his thoughts were, received the reply that he was "meditating the nature and number of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and, Oh! that it might be so on earth."[1]

¶ When Gladstone was asked for his favourite quotation he gave the six words of Dante, "La sua volontade e nostra pace"—"His Will is our peace."[2]

IV.

The Daily Bread.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

In the Lord's Prayer there are three petitions for God's glory, three for man's spiritual necessity, and in the midst is set one

[1] G. Milligan, *The Lord's Prayer*, 83.

[2] P. Dearmer, in *Churchmanship and Labour*, 249.

petition for man's bodily needs—only one, and that most full of significance, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Let us be reverent enough to take this sentence in its plain meaning. To give it some mystical or symbolic interpretation which our Lord did not mean it to have is to set up another prayer which is not the Lord's Prayer. "Daily bread" does not refer to the Eucharist. The word translated "daily" is very obscure, it occurs nowhere else in the Greek language; but all are agreed that the meaning is "bread for our daily subsistence," and the attempt made by Abelard in the twelfth century to translate it "supersubstantial" is undoubtedly wrong. The petition simply deals with the most fundamental of social questions—the need of sustenance.

¶ There is no better commentary on this petition than that of old Bishop Barrow: "A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone on the honey gained by others' labour; or like vermin to filch its food from the public granary; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry: but will one way or other earn his subsistence, for he that does not earn can hardly be said to own his daily bread."[1]

1. The first point to notice in this clause of the Lord's Prayer is its moderation. In the prayer which is prompted by our natural instinct we ask for everything we happen to want; we put ourselves first; we are immoderate in our desires; we seek to bend the Divine will to our own wishes. In all these respects, as has been already noticed, the Lord's Prayer puts human instinct under the strongest check. This prayer for the supply of our own needs is not allowed to be uttered till it has been preceded by prayer for the honouring of the Divine name, the coming of the Divine Kingdom, and the doing of the Divine will; and till, in all these respects, the law of heaven has been taken for the law of human conduct.

2. Next let us ask what daily bread can be understood to include? Surely it is all that is necessary for us to make the best of our faculties. It is nourishment; and everything may fairly be called nourishment which can be said to fertilize and

[1] P. Dearmer, in *Churchmanship and Labour*, 252.

liberate the energies of human nature, instead of cloying and clogging them. Once grant this, and it is obvious that very different things are meant by "bread" to different people. There is hardly any luxury which has not its use to stimulate this or that nature, or to meet this or that exceptional need. The question whether this or that article of diet or comfort can be used under the head of "daily bread," can be answered only by answering the question—Do I work the better for it? And in answering this question there are two facts, closely allied, which have to be kept in mind.

(1) The first is, that comforts very soon reach the point where they begin to clog human energies instead of liberating them. A venerable statesman has been often heard to remark that the things people say they "can't do without" are like the pieces of thread with which the Lilliputians bound Gulliver. Each of them could be snapt by itself, but taken together they bound him more tightly than strong cords. Nobody, therefore, can find out what he really needs for his work without constantly testing himself in giving up things. No one can consider a number of well-to-do Englishmen without perceiving that they are materialized; that is, that the supply of food and drink and comfort generally dulls their intellectual and still more their spiritual powers. In other words, the spirit in them is the slave of the flesh.

(2) Here comes in view the second fact. Fasting has been historically a principle of Christianity, and was so in Apostolic Christianity. Rightly stated, the principle of fasting is but the recognition that the flesh has in ordinary human life got the upper hand of the spirit, and that it is time for the spirit to take revenges upon the flesh, and to assert its mastery. Fasting, like every other principle, must have its methods and its rules and its order, or it will fail to take effect; but we are concerned now only with the principle, and it is this—the Christian will, from time to time, deliberately deny himself in lawful comforts, and nourishment of the body, in order to assert spiritual vitality, in order to find out what he can do without, in order to maintain the principle that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

3. The next point in this petition lies in the word "*this day.*" St. Matthew has "this day"; St. Luke has "day by day." It is conjectured that the one was the morning version and the other the evening version of the Early Church. The lesson is simple. We must be content to wait from day to day upon the hand of God; we must ask only for present needs; we must not be anxious about the morrow.

But, it may be said, how can this be reconciled with the forethought and far-sightedness that are necessary to civilized life? The answer lies in our own experience. Have we found that anxiety about possible consequences increased the clearness of our judgment? Have we found that it made us wiser and braver in meeting the present, or more far-sighted in arming ourselves for the future? We know very well that it is the opposite spirit that has made civilization possible—the spirit of men who are content to do their work from day to day, to plough the field and wait for the harvest, the spirit of men who take their meat from God in simple and hearty reliance upon the Power whom the earth and the winds and seas obey. Clearness of vision, providence, discovery, are the rewards of the calm and patient spirit, that is content day by day to have the daily bread. Out of the anxiety for the morrow that cannot pray, "Give us to-day our bread," spring all the evils of the money-lust—the fever of speculation, the hasting to be rich, the endless scheming, the continual reactions of fantastic hope and deep depression in individuals, of mad prosperity and intense sufferings in nations. Wars, oppressions, misery, crime—these are because men do not pray, "Give us this day."

V.

Forgiveness.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

After bread, forgiveness. After the wants of the body comes this prime necessity of the soul. "Give us our bread, forgive us our debts." It is put here as a daily spiritual need—something that we require as constantly as food.

1. *Debts.*—The Bible has many words for sin, but debt is the only word for it in the Lord's Prayer. In explaining this petition, our Saviour calls sins "trespasses," but in the Prayer itself we have only "debts." A debt is what is due but has not been done or paid. "Debts," "dues," and "duty" come from the same root. Sins are like debts in many ways, though not in everything, for the debts of the soul are more awful than any money debts can be. Sins represent duties that have not been met, and they make us guilty or liable to punishment.

2. *Our debts.*—Our debts are ours *exclusively*—without any subtraction, division, or partnership. They are ours as our eyes, our bones, and our soul are ours: they are ours alone; they cannot be ascribed to us and to some other person. It is in vain to blame others for them, as Adam blamed Eve, and Eve the serpent. Our temptations are not our sins, and our tempters cannot sin for us. Each is a solitary agent, and must bear his own burden of blame. And our debts are ours *inseparably.* Many tickets have the words, "Not transferable"; we are not allowed to hand them to some one else. Some people think that they may transfer their sins to pious relatives, to monks or nuns who pray and fast much, to priests, or to the Church. That cannot be; for there is only One who can say, "Put that on mine account."

3. *The forgiveness of our debts.*—A gospel is in the words. Here, in the Master's Prayer, given for the perpetual use of all men, is mention made of "sins" as belonging to all, and of "forgiveness" as ready for all; and the little particle "and" couples this petition, as though it were the easiest and most natural thing in the world, to the request for "daily bread." Could all this be so, if Christ our Lord were not teaching us that which God alone could know, that of which the reality could have been seen only in heaven, concerning that most impossible thing to flesh and blood—"the absolution and remission of our sins"?

¶ Forgiveness is the miracle of miracles of the Gospel Dispensation. You count it a great thing—it is so—when you see the Holy Ghost breathing into dead matter newness of life; when you see the lifeless affection rekindled, and the sinner, buried in his lusts and passions, quickened out of that grave into newness of life. But surely even this miracle, were infinites comparable,

might shrink into insignificance in contrast with that other. In this you see the effect, if not the instrumentality. You hear the wind, if you cannot track it. In the other, all is faith, all is supernatural, all is Divine, God, by the *fiat* of His own "Let there be light," bids the past, which is a real existence, shrivel up, and be no more. God bids the wicked act which you did last night, in your wantonness or in your refusal to reflect, to die with itself and bear no fruit. Did you think, when you lightly or summarily said last night's prayer, "Forgive us our sins," all, all that was involved in it? You might not—but Christ did. Christ, who presided over Creation—Christ, who became Incarnate that He might "become sin"—Christ took the measure of it. Christ taught that Prayer which you uttered—only I cannot tell whether the lips which said it meant it, felt it, or "babbled" in the uttering.[1]

VI.

Temptation.

"Lead us not into temptation."

The original and true meaning of the word "temptation" is simply a "trial," or a "test." Anything which tries a man's mettle, puts him to the proof, reveals the real character of his heart, is a temptation in the true sense of the word. This is its meaning in Holy Scripture, and this was also its only meaning in English at the time of the translation of our Authorized Version. Viewed in this light, every experience of life is a temptation. Our joys and sorrows, our health or sickness, our work or play, our adversity and prosperity can and do put us to the test quite as effectively as Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden.

1. The Christian, while in the world, has to face the temptations and dangers of the world; and, so long as there is any evil within him, he will be prone to yield to these. Only after a race, a race run in much weakness, it may be with many falls and bruises, does he obtain the prize. Only after a fight, a fight with the evil within him, around him, a fight which he is at times tempted to abandon in despair, is the victory his. Therefore it is

[1] C. J. Vaughan, *The Lord's Prayer*, 131.

that our Lord, to the petition for forgiveness, adds the further petition, "Lead us not into temptation." As that points to the past, this points to the future. When we pray, "Forgive us our debts," we think of contracted guilt which we ask God to cancel, liabilities we have failed to meet which we ask Him to pardon. When we pray "and lead us" (or "bring us") "not into temptation," we think of the temptations and difficulties which are lying before us, and ask for the needful grace and strength to meet them. It is as if with the Psalmist we cried, "Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

2. But it may be asked: "Why should we thus pray to God? Do we not know that, as He 'cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man'" (Jas. i. 13)? Yes; but God may permit temptation. He does not, like the tempter, stand on the side of temptation, and desire to see evil result from it; but He may at times place a man in such a situation that it is very easy for him to do wrong, very hard for him to do right. Thus we read of our Lord Himself that He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. iv. 1). He was as much under the guidance and direction of God then as when He went down into the water to be baptized; and because His will was in perfect harmony with the will of God, He successfully overcame the temptation. And so, when we look forward to the temptations which must meet us in the world, what petition can be more natural for us than that God should not bring us into such as may prove too strong for us? It is our prayer of conscious weakness, the weakness which shrinks from the danger by which it may be overcome; or, in the words of the Shorter Catechism, it is the prayer "that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted."

3. If we are following Christ fully, we will not hesitate to go with Him into any experience, however perilous it may be. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Yet so much is involved in temptation, such possibilities of defeat and failure are dependent on the issue, that we dare not desire to enter into it. It is pre-

sumptuous to clamour to be led into the conflict. More than once Jesus warned His disciples to watch, that they might not enter into temptation. He knew how inadequate their courage and strength would prove in battle with the Evil One, how their faith would fail in the moment of assault. We read of soldiers sick of camp, and chafing to be led against the enemy, but the Christian who is impatient to be tempted is very foolish. Temptation is too terrible an experience to be rushed into, unled by God.

VII.

The Evil One.

"Deliver us from the evil one" (R.V.).

St. Paul says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." In other words, the temptations that come from visible and tangible sources draw their strength from a source which is unseen. Behind visible foes there is an invisible; behind the visible opposition of evil men there is an invisible prince of darkness and an unseen host of fallen spirits intruding themselves into the highest things, into the heavenly places.

¶ I am quite sure that our Lord speaks so confidently and so frequently of the existence of evil spirits that a sober Christian cannot doubt their reality, and I feel sure also that their existence interprets a good deal which would otherwise be unintelligible in our spiritual experience. When thoughts of poisonous evil, distinct and vivid, are shot into our mind, like suggestions from a bad companion; when a tempest of pride and rebellion against God surges over our soul; when voices of discouragement and despair tell us that it is no use trying, and that human nature is hopelessly bad; when a sinful course of action presents itself to us in a wholly false aspect until we have committed ourselves to it, and then strips off its disguises and shows itself in its true colours, in its ugliness, in its treachery, in its infamy—in all such experiences we do well to remember that besides the weakness or pollution of our own flesh, and besides the solicitations of the world, there is "the adversary," "the devil," that is, the

slanderer of God and of our human nature and the "father of lies," actually at work to seduce our wills and sophisticate our intelligences.[1]

1. What the particular form of deliverance is which we require must be left for each one to discover in the silence of his or her own heart. The devil does not assail us all alike; he comes to us in many ways. To some he comes in great spiritual dulness or deadness, rendering them unable to lift up their thoughts or hearts to God, whispering that God has forgotten them, and no longer cares for them, His children. To others he comes in all the might of some terrible besetting sin,—anger, pride, impurity, intemperance,—binding them with cords which seem too strong to be broken; while many—all—even if they are not conscious of any one outstanding temptation, and can point to no special hindrance in their Christian path, yet know that their lives are not what they ought to be, and that, consciously or unconsciously, openly or secretly, they are continually led to do those things which they ought not to have done, and to leave undone those things which they ought to have done.

¶ It is told of a Roman youth who, notwithstanding a mother's unwearied prayers, had lived a life of self-seeking and sinful indulgence, that one day, as he sat in the garden, in the cloudless beauty of an autumn day, a great struggle took place in his mind. Throwing himself on his knees he prayed earnestly to God, "O Lord, how long—how long—how long wilt thou be angry with me? Must it be for ever to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow? Why should it not be to-day?" Suddenly in his agony he seemed to hear the voice as of a little child repeating, "Take up and read"; "Take up and read." And taking up the Epistles of St. Paul which he had happened to be reading, and opening the book at random, his eye caught these words: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. xiii. 13, 14). The words came to him as a direct message from God, and in one instant strong resolve, he determined for ever to break with his old life and in the might of Christ to enter on the new. Augustine put on Christ.[2]

[1] Charles Gore, *Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*, 75.
[2] G. Milligan, *The Lord's Prayer*, 153.

2. There are temptations to the energetic and there are temptations to the indolent.

(1) *To the energetic.*—Let us mention just a few temptations. Irritability with others who perhaps do not work quite on our lines, or in our way; self-satisfaction, with that blunting of sympathy for others which so often accompanies it; trust in self, rather than reliance on God; perhaps a disposition to sacrifice means to ends, to be so anxious to attain some good object that we, as Shakespeare says, "to do a great right do a little wrong." We may name also uncharitable judgments; want of consideration for other people's points of view; perhaps thinking we are doing so much for God in some respects that He will not be very particular about our shortcomings in others; *e.g.*, letting our practical duties swallow up all our time for prayer, or being very kind to those we love, but not quite upright and sincere in our dealings with our neighbour, or being very devout, and good to the poor, yet living on in some sinful habit. Let us add, impatience for results, and fretfulness under disappointment.

(2) *To the indolent.*—Are there no temptations to the timid, the slothful, and the indifferent? Does not Satan come to us in the guise of a false humility?—false humility, as Milton represents him doing to our Lord when he appeared an aged man in rural weeds—

> Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,
> Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
> Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,
> To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,

or when he departs, baffled at the close—

> bowing low
> His gray dissimulation.

Does not Satan often come wearing an air of lowliness, or inviting us to assume one, whispering in our ear that *we* are not the people to put ourselves forward or to exert ourselves, that *we* are only commonplace, that third-class carriages are the proper ones for us to ride in, that *we* need not feel any self-reproach when we hear of great acts, great efforts, great self-denials?

¶ We read of a man like Henry Martyn, the evangelist of India, and think we have settled everything by saying, "People like that are born saints; they belong to quite a different category from ourselves." We seem to think there is a kind of virtue in shirking anything that calls us to rise above an everyday level, and that we deserve credit for our very neglect of duty. I do wish sometimes some of us were a little more ambitious, a little more eager, about the best things. We do not seem to realize that Satan can tempt and does tempt people quite as much to be slothful and stupid in religion as he does to be proud and self-righteous. There is no more instructive passage in the *Pilgrim's Progress* than the picture of the enchanted ground. It has no grim figure of Apollyon with his darts, nor of Giant Despair with his bolts and bars, nor of the worldly seductions and bitter persecutions of "Vanity Fair": the enemy is not seen; he is shapeless and impalpable, but his power is on the heavy eyelids, the stupefied brain, the laggard limbs of every pilgrim who goes through the region and feels its dulling, deadening influence.[1]

[1] Elizabeth Wordsworth, *Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer*, 212.

The First Things First.

LITERATURE.

Alexander (S. A.), *Christ and Scepticism*, 109.
Clayton (C.), *Stanhope Sermons*, 127.
Davies (J. Ll.), *Social Questions*, 154.
Ebright (H. K)., in *Drew Sermons on the Golden Texts for 1910*, 37.
Ewing (J. F.), *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, 241.
Hare (J. C.), *Parish Sermons*, i. 283.
Hort (F. J. A.), *Village Sermons*, ii. 81.
Howard (H.), *The Raiment of the Soul*, 58.
Jackson (G.), *The Teaching of Jesus*, 129.
Jenkinson (A.), *A Modern Disciple*, 107.
Kingsley (C.), *Sermons for the Times*, 167.
Kuegele (F.), *Country Sermons*, New Ser., iv. 550.
McIlveen (J.), *Christ and the Christian Life*, 121.
Miller (G. A.), *The Life Efficient*, 39.
Miller (J.), *Sermons*, i. 37.
Porter (N.), *Yale College Sermons*, 268.
Reid (J.), *The First Things of Jesus*, 119.
Southouse (A. J.), *The Men of the Beatitudes*, 127.
Talbot (E. S.), *Sermons at Southwark*, 267.
Wardell (R. J.), *Sermons in Homiletics*, 116.
Williams (C. D.), *A Valid Christianity for To-Day*, 276.
Wilson (J. M.), *Sermons Preached in Clifton College Chapel*, ii. 7.
Woodhouse (F. C.), *The Life of the Soul*, 262.
Young (P.), in *Sermons for the People*, vi. 121.
Christian World Pulpit, xii. 164 (H. W. Beecher); lxi. 184 (F. W. Macdonald); lxxv. 300 (G. E. Darlaston); lxxxi. 156 (W. MacMullen).
Church of England Pulpit, lxii. 166 (H. H. Henson).
Church Family Newspaper, Jan. 12, 1912 (J. D. Thompson).
Record, May 28, 1909 (G. Nickson).

The First Things First.

But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matt. vi. 33.

There is no sentence which more distinctively expresses the mind of Jesus regarding the conduct of life than "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness." It gathers up everything into itself. It is His definition of the chief good which is within the reach of men. Many other words of His may be taken as ruling principles of life, but they are only parts of this simple and sublime utterance. It is the "secret of Jesus," the clue which He put into the hands of men to guide them through the labyrinth of life.

Many of the deep-reaching principles of Jesus were spoken in opposition to those of the Scribes and Pharisees, but in this instance He passes beyond the ideas of any sect or class, and sets forth His thought of the chief aim of life in contrast to what was universally held then, and is also widely, if not universally, held now. In His moral perspective the desirable things of life are arranged in a startlingly new order, and with a surprisingly strong emphasis. He places first what men degrade to a very subordinate position. In the foreground, as men's highest and best good, He sets the quest for the Kingdom of God.

I.

The Kingdom of God.

Every man who would make life a success must have something that is always first for him. Now Jesus declared that the great first thing of life is the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness."

1. The Kingdom of God and His righteousness is one of the

key-phrases of the gospel, and it is freely employed in many connexions. Christ takes it from the common stock of political phraseology, from which the men of His nation clothed their aspirations. In a theocracy the State adopts the language of the Church and advances identical claims. "The Kingdom of God," as the formula of Messianic politics, meant no more than a mere project of nationalist triumph. But Christ, in adopting the phrase, purged it of secularism, exalted it from the plane of politics to that of morals, and enlarged it until all the drama of human life could be gathered within its meaning. It stood for loyalty to the higher self, obedience to the Divine monitions of conscience, the pursuit of righteous ends, the self-dedication to spiritual service, the sustained crusade against evil within and without the man himself. Christ tells us that there is a true order of human endeavour, and that when that order is followed all the lesser concerns of human life find sufficient and unfailing guarantee. Make these your principal concern, and you lose the *summum bonum* itself, and do not even secure them. "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He unrolls before us no alluring picture of reward, no Muhammadan Paradise of feasting and pleasure, but He tells us that we are the sons of the Most High, and bids us live as such.

> Nor sang he only of unfading bowers,
> Where they a tearless, painless age fulfil,
> In fields Elysian spending blissful hours,
> Remote from every ill;
> But of pure gladness found in temperance high,
> In duty owned, and reverenced with awe,
> Of man's true freedom, which may only lie
> In servitude to law.

2. The Kingdom of God which we are to seek is a great ideal, under which all lesser aims must find their place; it provides us with a great end of all action to which the plans and purposes of our daily lives are but means; it informs our lives with a great principle by which all our acts are co-ordinated and to which they are relative. The word "kingdom" speaks of something wide, all-embracing, manifold, but with all its manifoldness made one by law, which impresses upon all its diverse elements the

unity of one will, one purpose, one destiny. We are too apt to speak of an ideal as something wholly unattainable, and to excuse ourselves for not living the ideal life by saying that it is ideal; that is not the sense in which our Lord speaks of the Kingdom of God. It is rather an ideal to be realized in every act, and therefore within our reach at every moment; imperfect as we are, it is to be embodied in us, and made visible to the world through our lives. To seek for the material objects, the subordinate aims of life first, before this ideal is apprehended, is to invert the order in which God would have us live; to immerse ourselves in details, without constant reference to the ideal, is to break up our lives, our characters, our institutions, into incoherent fragments devoid of all unity. The details are not indeed unimportant, but they are important only in relation to the ideal, which gives to them all their beauty, all their excellence. Without it they are but as the random streaks of colour on a painter's palette; with it, and in due subordination to it, they are as the various brush-strokes which gradually realize on the canvas the one purpose of the painter's mind. "All these things," these lesser objects, these fragmentary aims, these partial goods, shall be not theirs who strive for them alone, but theirs who seek first the ideal, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

¶ In all ages men have dreamed of isles of the blessed and Elysian fields. Some have dreamed of Utopias in this world. But in all these dreams only externals have been considered. Pindar sings:

> For them the night all through,
> In that broad realm below,
> The splendour of the sun spreads endless light;
> 'Mid rosy meadows bright . . .
> There with horses and with play
> With games and lyres they while the hours away.

And Plato in his ideal republic, and modern dreamers, plan only for an equitable distribution of property and the elimination of poverty, that should accompany the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. But the first characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven is that it is *inward*. Facts prove that men can be rich and educated and yet vile. Nations have been prosperous and cultured, but rotted away because of their sin. The Kingdom of Heaven is in the heart of men. St. Paul said, "The kingdom of

God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[1]

3. The "Kingdom of God," to use Bishop Gore's terse and pregnant definition, is, "human society as organized according to the will of God," just as "the world" of the New Testament is "human society as organized apart from the will of God." It means the will of the Father-king "done in earth, as it is in heaven." Now to take up our ordinary daily work, whatever it be, as a ministry of human service fitting into the great plan of God for a redeemed universe, and to do it to that end, to set that high purpose and ideal over it all and be absolutely faithful to that, cost what it may of success or gain, whether in the form of wages or profits, to eliminate the mercenary motive and substitute that spiritual purpose—that is to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in our common occupations.

The Kingdom of God is an empire with three provinces. One province is a man's own heart, when the throne of Christ is once really set up in it. Another province is the Church as it is established upon the earth. And another is that final and magnificent condition of all things, when Christ shall come and reign in His glory. There are, then, before every one these three great primary objects: the first is to have the whole of one's own heart in subjugation to God; the second is to extend the Church; and the third is to long and pray for, and help on, the Second Coming of Christ. If we have begun to make the Kingdom of God our great object, then our first desire is that Christ may have His proper place in our hearts. Our great longing is after holiness. We are more anxious about our holiness than we are about our happiness. And then every day we are trying to make some one happier and better. We have in our circles inner ones and outer ones. We do not neglect the nearer for the sake of the farther one; but yet we do not so confine ourselves to that which is close that we do nothing for that which is far off. But we love the Church, the whole Church of Christ; we are trying to increase the Church of Christ; we go about with a missionary spirit. And, further, our eye is looking for the coming of Jesus. It is a happy thought to us every day, "Now the coming of Jesus is

[1] H. K. Ebright.

nearer than it was yesterday," because it is to us no fear; we are not watching against it, we are watching for it; it is the climax of all pleasant things to us.

¶ The return of Christ in bodily form to reign over His faithful ones, their own bodies rescued from death and the grave, is the aim and goal of our exultant hope. For that return His early followers eagerly waited. And their eager hope suggested that perhaps they might hear His voice and see His face without passing under the dark shadow of death. That expectation was not fulfilled. And we cannot share it. But, long as the time seems, that day will come. Had we witnessed the creation of matter, and known that long ages were predestined to elapse before rational man would stand on the earth, our expectation would have wearied at the long delay. But those long ages rolled by; and for thousands of years our planet has teemed with rational life. So will pass by whatever ages remain before our Lord's return. Many reasons suggest that, though not close at hand, it cannot be very long delayed. Doubtless we shall lay us down for our last sleep. But in our sleep we shall be with Him. And when the morning dawns we shall wake up in the splendour of the rising Sun.

Yes, I come quickly.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.[1]

4. Thus the Kingdom is both individual and social. It begins with the individual indeed; it can do nothing unless it transforms the springs of action within him. But it does not end with the individual. It proposes to regenerate society also, and so to renew both that every individual act and every social agency shall be in harmony with the original ideal of God. Its Founder in His humility declared the Kingdom of God to be like leaven which rests not till it pervades and restores the mass unto itself. And when He sat upon His throne, He said, "Behold, I make all things new."

¶ The Kingdom of Heaven does not mean the kingdom *in* heaven. The phrase describes the Kingdom's temper and quality, not its locality. It is a term spiritual, and not geographical. John Bunyan had a wonderful vision of spiritual experience in Bedford gaol. It is accurate enough so long as you make it subjective. A man ought to escape from spiritual pest-holes, and

[1] J. Agar Beet, *The Last Things*, 112.

struggle out of spiritual despondency, and get the burden of his sin loosened from the shoulders of his soul, and vigorously climb hills of difficulty, and valiantly fight the devil, and get mountain-top visions of the Glory Land, before he gets to the Celestial City. But if you forget that these are interior experiences that the great spiritual dramatist is describing, and make them instead a picture of a man's actual attitude towards the world, then the pilgrim's achievement ceases to be a spiritual exercise and becomes a terribly selfish performance. For the thing that is true about the man who really seeks the Kingdom where it ought to exist—that is, on earth—is that he will not run away from the city of destruction, but do his best to make it a city of God; will not calmly desert wife and family to get personal spiritual treasure; and will not be carelessly indifferent to his companions on his trip because they are not of his sort. And if he comes to a slough of despond, he will try to drain the swamp instead of merely floundering in and floundering out again; and when he escapes from the castle of the Giant Despair, he will bombard the castle and do his best to make an end of the giant for the sake of other poor pilgrims. His business is not to get to the City Celestial as soon as possible, but to bring celestial atmosphere and celestial splendour into all the regions through which he moves.[1]

5. Our Lord adds, "and his righteousness." What does He mean? There is a righteousness such as that in which man was originally made upright; there is a righteousness which is a part of the character of God; and there is a righteousness composed of all the perfections of the life of Christ. These three righteousnesses are all one. Now, this triple righteousness is what every good man is "seeking" after: first, something which will justify him before God, and then something which will justify him to his own conscience, and to the world, in believing that he is justified before God. And where shall a man find his justification before God but in faith in Jesus Christ? And where shall a man find the justification of his faith and hope that he is justified, but in the justification of his own good works which he is doing every day? To those, then, that "seek" these two things — "the kingdom" and "the righteousness" — the promise belongs.

¶ Righteousness, as it was understood and taught by Christ, includes the two things which we often distinguish as religion

[1] W. MacMullen.

and morality. It is right-doing, not only as between man and man, but as between man and God. The Lawgiver of the New Testament, like the lawgiver of the Old, has given to us two tables of stone. On the one He has written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"; and on the other, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In these two commandments the whole law is summed up, the whole duty of man is made known.[1]

6. God's righteousness is itself the very spirit of His own Kingdom. Christ does not here tell us merely to seek *righteousness*, though elsewhere we are thus bidden; but to seek *God's* righteousness. Any righteousness which is of our own making, which we try to gain by standing aloof from Him, is worth nothing at all. *His* righteousness does not merely mean righteousness *like* His, but His own very righteousness. We must receive Himself into our hearts, and then His righteousness will spring up within us and overflow all our doings.

And we receive God into our hearts by receiving Christ. Christ is all His followers are to be; in Him the righteousness of the Kingdom is incarnate. From henceforth the righteous man is the Christ-like man. The standard of human life is no longer a code but a character; for the gospel does not put us into subjection to fresh laws; it calls us to "the study of a living Person, and the following of a living Mind." And when to Jesus we bring the old question, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He does not now repeat the commandments, but He says, "If thou wouldst be perfect, follow Me, learn of Me, do as I have done to you, love as I have loved you."

¶ "Unselfed and inchristed" is the phrase that has been employed to set forth the great transaction of spiritual renewal; and observe how the Apostle encourages us to serve a writ of ejection on the old tenant, our evil self, and to bring in a new occupant of the premises: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; . . . and that ye *put on* the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." No betterment or reformation of the depraved tenant, who is also in hopeless arrears with his landlord, but a peremptory order to move out! Moreover, the

[1] G. Jackson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, 129.

Christian is considered to have done this very thing—evicted his former self, and set its goods and chattels out upon the sidewalk. "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." So vividly and strongly did this conception take hold of Martin Luther that he used to say, "When any one comes and knocks at the door of my heart and asks, 'Who lives here?' I reply, 'Martin Luther used to, but he has moved out, and Jesus Christ now lives here.'"[1]

II.

The Kingdom First.

"Seek ye first." It is interesting to note that the word translated "seek" in the text has for one of its meanings, if not for its primary significance, "to beat the covers for birds." It is the sportsman's method of seeking. How does a sportsman seek? Many readers of these words will know from experience what it means in the way of work, even under the most favourable conditions, for a sportsman to fill his bag—how he must be prepared to wade swamps, climb uplands, push through brake and brier, watch, wait, wriggle, and in fact do everything but fail, for no sportsman worthy of the name cares to come back with an empty bag. If, however, he is to succeed, his whole soul must be in his quest. Hand and eye and ear must all be working in concert. For note it is "birds under cover" to which the word relates, and, that being so, the bird is up only for a brief moment, and must be taken as it flies. What a startling suggestion is this—the Kingdom of God like a bird on the wing! It is a passing thing—here now, and to-day within present sight and range; but it is speeding past, and we must take it as it flies lest to-morrow it should be "under cover," and "these things be hid from our eyes."

1. First—that is now, and without further procrastination, if the fresh dawn of existence is no longer mine. It is suicidal to persist through another hour in filching from my soul its proper patrimony. My times are uncertain; my health is brittle; hardening and ossifying influences are incessant in their action;

[1] *A. J. Gordon: A Biography*, 100.

God is free to take His departure. Is it not the folly of follies to stand in jeopardy for one instant more? First—that is, when I rise in the beginning of each day. If I have sought and found the Kingdom's gold and crystal and pearl and gem, let me renew acquaintance with them every morning. To them, and to the Lord who makes and keeps them my own, let me return, when mind is clear and thought is vigorous and weariness is far away. So they will gleam into warmer loveliness and greater worth.

We would fill the hours with the sweetest things
If we had but one day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
In our upward way;
We should love with a lifetime's love in an hour
If the hours were few;
We should rest not for dreams, but for fresher power
To be and to do.

We should waste no moments in weak regret
If the day were but one;
If what we remember and what we regret
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work and to pray,
And to be what the Father would have us to be,
If we had but a day.[1]

2. But to seek the Kingdom first means more than this. It means an act of deliberate preference on the many occasions in life when counter claims come up. Again and again it may be that, in our inner life, in our family life, in our business life, in our public life, there come, and will come, times when the forces of the world, of self, of sense, of earthly affection, of taste, of ambition, pull one way, and the interests of the Kingdom of God the other, and for an hour, a day, a week, a month, perhaps, there is a struggle as to which is to be put first.

The major problem of life is that of its dominant note, its central issue, its great first thing. The one supreme business of living is to get that decisive emphasis on the thing that is first. The supreme tragedy of life comes to the man who gets the major emphasis on something else than the first thing. All life is then

[1] Mary Lowe Dickinson.

out of proportion, all experience a tangle, and all tasks in confusion. There are strong lives that stagger and sink because they have missed the course. There are men of genius who go out in despair because they have put the major emphasis on the wrong thing. It is no more possible to bring strength to a life with a false axis than to keep the solar system in order with some other body than the sun as its centre. Poe and Byron, and Burns and Shelley, and De Quincey and Napoleon, and Nero and Saul were men who got the emphasis in the wrong place, and their splendid lives crashed to inglorious ruin. Lesser men in lesser measure exhibit the same tragedy of misplaced emphasis and disordered lives.

¶ The sister of Nietzsche tells us that, when the thinker was a little boy, he and she once decided to take each of them a toy to give to the Moravian Sisters in support of their missionary enterprise. They carefully chose their toys and duly carried them to the Sisters. But when they returned Nietzsche was restless and unhappy. His sister asked what ailed him. "I have done a very wicked thing," the boy answered. "My fine box of cavalry is my favourite toy and my best: I should have taken *that*!" "But do you think," his sister asked, "do you think God always wants *our best*?" "Yes," replied the young philosopher, "always, *always*!" The lad was then, at least, following a true instinct. Professor William James, in his Lecture to Teachers on "The Stream of Consciousness," says that every object is either "*focal*" or "*marginal*" in the mind. That represents with psychological precision the difference between the sanctities of life as they appeared to my Syrian bushman [who made a god out of only "the residue" of the tree he had felled] and the sanctities of life as they appeared to the boy philosopher. In the one case they were merely marginal; in the other they were grandly focal. Surely, if they have a place at all, they should be in the very centre of the field—regal, transcendent, sublime. The whole matter is summed up there.[1]

3. Of course the ideals of Christ and the world are not opposed as good and bad, or as right and wrong, but as first and second. It is a total misapprehension of our Lord's words to say that He forbids His followers to *think* of getting the wealth of the world, or of securing "what they shall eat and drink or wherewithal they shall be clothed." Men's fault and folly lie in

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Mountains in the Mist*, 66.

seeking them as if they were primary and essential; in making them the treasures of the soul; in thinking of them with anxious and absorbing care, as if they supplied the supreme need of life. The Kingdom of God is not set in opposition to the things of the world for which men seek; *it is set above them.* It belongs to a realm that is higher than the physical and the material. It has to do with the essential life of man—a life that is more than existence, more than meat, more than riches. Man is a child of earth and time, but he is also a child of God—a spiritual being, made in His image, with power to think His thoughts and live in fellowship with Him. All thought and effort which are dominated by a lower conception of man's nature are misdirected. They leave him unsatisfied and undeveloped. The riddle of our life is never solved until we say, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

¶ It is as if a company of sculptors should spend all their time and effort providing pedestals,—some able to get only rough boulders from the wayside, others polishing and finishing fine shafts of purest marble,—but nobody thinking of carving a statue to set thereon. Or as if a company of painters busied themselves exclusively with finding and stretching their canvases, some getting only coarse sacking, others silks of the finest web,—but nobody ever painted a picture. Now Jesus is saying here, "Don't bother so much about the pedestals and the canvases. They are absolutely insignificant beside the statues and the pictures. These are the paramount concern." The roughest boulder that carries a noble statue is better than the finest shaft of polished marble that carries nothing. The coarsest sacking upon which some rude but great etching has been sketched is better than the most delicate silk which is absolutely blank. So the meagrest living upon which a life of human service and spiritual significance is built is infinitely better than the most luxurious existence which but cumbers the ground with its purposeless and useless occupancy of space and time.[1]

4. Jesus is asking men to do what He did Himself. He knew the numberless spiritual perils of poverty. He suffered hunger, and had power to make the stones of the wilderness bread. But to use His power in that way would have shown that He put self before God, and the satisfying of hunger before the interests

[1] C. D. Williams, *A Valid Christianity for To-Day*, 281.

of His Kingdom. He saw that "life is more than meat," that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He set the Kingdom first, and the angels ministered unto Him. Because He was tempted thus He is able to succour those who are tempted by the same pressure of need. It is in divinest pity that He says to the poor, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He knew the tragedies of the souls of men, knew how the soul could be lost in the strong and urgent pressure of the demands of the body. Therefore He spoke so convincingly and so persuasively of the Heavenly Father's care, and gave the great assurance of His loving watchfulness. To Him man is dearer than to himself. He bids men trust God to provide what they need for the body, and give their anxiety and strength to the doing of His will. God will not deny Himself. Faithfulness on our part will be answered by faithfulness on His. His name has ever been "Jehovah-jireh": "The Lord will provide." If men seek first the Kingdom of God, He will not fail to add "all these things."

¶ Trust in God, an unshaken confidence in God, which is never dismayed at the changes or surprises of life—he who has this faith will not be distracted by anxious care concerning the things of this life. He will make God the supreme object of his choice and service, will seek first His Kingdom and righteousness, confident that the Father, who knows all his needs, will confer the minor benefits. This confidence that God will approve and bless us in all our life if we seek *first* His Kingdom and righteousness, and seek all other things *second*, is the faith which "removes mountains" (Mark xi. 23); it is adequate to the greatest difficulties and perplexities of life. It steadies, strengthens, and unifies all our efforts, preventing us from wasting our energies by dividing life between two inconsistent objects, and from wearing our hearts out by corroding cares, needless anxieties, and unbelieving fears. There can be no doubt that Jesus would include this concentration of life upon spiritual good and the trustful spirit which it inspires, in that love to God which comprises all forms of service which we can render to Him.[1]

[1] G. B. Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, 110.

III.

All these Things.

1. The possession of the Kingdom carries with it every needful thing. All values are included in the Divine. Within the Kingdom is absolute beauty, "the altogether lovely," and if you seek for that the beautiful must come to you. Within the Kingdom is absolute truth, and if you seek for that the true will come to you in the process. And if you do with all your might whatsoever your hands find to do, and do it for the highest end, those necessaries of life which money can buy will also come to you. Good workers who live for the Kingdom never lack bread. It is true that often the very best of them get nothing but bread, or "bread and salt," whilst those who care nothing for the Kingdom get bread and many things besides. But as Lewis Morris puts it, "Strong souls need little more than bread and truth and beauty."

> Strong souls within the present live;
> The future veiled,—the past forgot;
> Grasping what is, with thews of steel,
> They bend what shall be, to their will;
> And blind alike to doubt and dread,
> The End, for which they are, fulfil.

And it was to make strong souls that Jesus came.

¶ There is a story in the "Arabian Nights" of a prince who brought to the king, his father, a fairy tent folded into the confines of a walnut shell. When it was spread in the council chamber it sheltered the king and his counsellors. When taken out and spread in the courtyard, it provided shade for all the household. When taken out on the great plain, where the army were encamped, it grew until all the hosts were beneath its canopy. It had flexibility and expansiveness which were indefinite. That gives us a fair symbol of the expansive, co-ordinating, all-inclusive capacity of the Kingdom of God, which gathers into its confines all the needs and all the treasures of men.[1]

2. There are many things which we get by aiming beyond them. Philosophers of the world tell us that we should aim at

[1] W. MacMullen.

what is near and tangible, and should not concern ourselves with what is shadowy and remote; that to talk of and aim at such things as God's love and God's righteousness and a high and chivalrous rule of duty is wasting our time on things not within our reach. Now, that these high and far things *are* indefinite and misty to us at times is granted. If you get into argument with some philosopher of the lower school he can easily show you that his aims are more practical, as he calls it, that the things he aims at are more clearly in his view. But how if the Divine law holds good in spite of his practical philosophy; how, if by aiming at what we admit is remote and dim, we make sure of getting all that is really worth having in these everyday things? When we have aimed at getting reputation we have missed it; when we have aimed at doing duty and helping man the reputation has come. Have we never found this law holding good even in the struggles of our inner life? When we fought with a number of small faults we made little progress. When we aimed at some high, self-devoted goal beyond, they disappeared. The other things were added. When men fire the rocket of the life-saving apparatus out to a ship, they aim, not at the deck, but considerably above it.

¶ A woodsman wielding his axe swings it upward to lop off the heavy branch, but finds it hard work. His skyward strokes are feeble, for the law of gravitation operates against him and to a certain extent neutralizes the power of his arm. He next swings it downward, and every stroke makes the hills resound. He works with and not against the law of gravitation; and the power of this central law of creation being added to the power of his muscles, he prosecutes his work with energy and success. Every stroke has a double power—the power of the arm and the power of gravitation. Thus man in pursuit of evil proceeds in the teeth of the most potent laws of the Divine Government—the odds are all against him, his strokes are all upwards; and sooner or later he must be made to feel the weariness of wrong-doing. But the good man places himself in harmony with the moral law of God, and thus the strength of the law becomes his panoply. His goodness is so far an advantage to him and not an impediment. And in prophecy the reign of goodness is always associated with the reign of plenty; when the knowledge of God will cover the earth, then and not before will a harvest of wheat be reaped upon the tops of the mountains.

Evil and famine on the one hand, goodness and abundance on the other, always go together.[1]

¶ A man gifted with powers and capacities for the calling desires to become an artist. He will aim high. He tells himself that he will not be content with mediocrity, nor allow himself to sink to the lower level of other men. Of him it shall not be true:

> That low man seeks a little thing to do,
> Sees it, and does it.

Rather will he be one who, if he fail, can cry:

> Better have failed in the high aim, as I,
> Than vulgarly in the low aim succeed,
> As, God be thanked, I do not.

But how shall he become such a one? Only when he has stood before the great masterpieces of all time, and felt the spirit of their creators breathe upon his own. He must enter into their mind; he must feel the nobility of their conceptions touch his own faculty of imagination; he must see the vision of the lesson they sought to write upon their canvas; he must catch the loftiness and grandeur of the spirit that animated them. And what follows? In proportion as these things enter into his soul, possess his faculties, transfuse their own powers into his, will success and greatness meet him. Had he sought success and greatness for themselves alone he would have failed; but, seeking first the spirit of a Master's mind, "all these things have been added unto him."[2]

3. It is only when our hearts are on the chief thing that secondary things yield pleasure. It is possible to have a thing, and yet not to have the good of it. There it is in our hands, the very thing we wanted apparently, and yet it does not seem to be the thing we wanted. It is not the thing, but the aroma of pleasure that is in the thing that we really wish; just as we wish a rose for its smell. Now, pleasure is a very delicate article. Men miss pleasure by the ways they take to get it. If they snatch impatiently at it, it escapes them. Except those in actual destitution, professional pleasure-seekers are the most miserable of men. People who spend their life in pursuit of pleasure never get it. One who knew about these things very well said, "Pleasures are

[1] J. C. Jones. [2] G. Nickson.

like poppies spread; you seize the flower; its bloom is shed." We go to some of the most beautiful objects in nature. If we happen to take them in a wrong light, on a bad day, at a false angle, they lose all their beauty. Or if we are trying to experience some pleasant sensation, the least thing wrong with our health, the least thing amiss with the experiment we make, spoils all. The poise of our mind is everything. Pleasure comes when we are seeking something else, when we are rejoicing in hard work, when we are resting after long exertion, when we have won some worthy object of ambition. The true flower of satisfaction is thrown into our lap by an invisible hand when we are thinking little or nothing of it.

¶ One of the first and most clearly recognized rules to be observed is that happiness is most likely to be attained when it is not the direct object of pursuit. Both the greatest pleasures and the keenest pains of life lie much more in those humbler spheres which are accessible to all than on the rare pinnacles to which only the most gifted or the most fortunate can attain. It would probably be found upon examination that most men who have devoted their lives successfully to great labours and ambitions, and who have received the most splendid gifts from Fortune, have nevertheless found their chief pleasure in things unconnected with their main pursuits and generally within the reach of common men. Domestic pleasures, pleasures of scenery, pleasures of reading, pleasures of travel or of sport, have been the highest enjoyment of men of great ambition, intellect, wealth, and position.[1]

> Oh righteous doom, that they who make
> Pleasure their only end,
> Ordering the whole life for its sake,
> Miss that whereto they tend.[2]

4. The things we wish to have are not really in our hands at all. Suppose that when we grasped the thing we could make certain that the pleasure for the sake of which we grasped it would not evaporate in the process, how could we make sure of grasping it? It might be taken from us when we were within a few inches of it. The things for which men toil and suffer are often taken from them in this way. The things the Gentiles

[1] W. E. H. Leckie, *The Map of Life*, 19.
[2] R. C. Trench.

seek can never be in our hands. They remain in God's hands. They are always His, and not ours at all. They are like old illuminated manuscripts or curiosities which you see on the table of a museum or library. We may examine them, and read them, but we cannot take them away. We cannot acquire freehold rights on God's great estate. We are only tenants at will, and therefore what we should first do is to gain the goodwill of the Proprietor, especially as it is a great deal more than His goodwill which He offers us. He offers us His love and Himself, and it stands to reason that "all these things" will be thrown into the bargain.

¶ It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good. There are so many things wrong and difficult in the world, that no man can be great—he can hardly keep himself from wickedness—unless he gives up thinking much about pleasure or rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful. And so, if you mean to act nobly and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of men, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it. And remember, if you were to choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek your own pleasure and escape from what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be calamity falling on a base mind, which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it, and that may well make a man say,—"It would have been better for me if I had never been born."[1]

¶ This is the sovereign remedy: to believe utterly in the Heavenly Father's love and wisdom and make His Kingdom and His righteousness the supreme concerns, leaving all lesser interests in His hands. "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Here is the secret of a quiet heart. "Nothing," says St. Chrysostom, "makes men light-hearted like deliverance from care and anxiety, especially when they may be delivered therefrom without suffering any disadvantage, forasmuch as God is with them and stands them in lieu of all."[2]

[1] George Eliot, Epilogue to *Romola*.

[2] David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, 295.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment!
He ventured neck or nothing—Heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes
Hence with life's pale lure!"[1]

[1] Browning, *A Grammarian's Funeral.*

The Golden Rule.

LITERATURE.

Balmforth (R.), *The New Testament in the Light of the Higher Criticism*, 108.

Bonar (H.), *God's Way of Holiness*, 104.

Chadwick (W. E.), *Christ and Everyday Life*, 103.

Davies (J. Ll.), *Social Questions*, 97.

Fox (W. J.), *Collected Works*, iii. 155.

Goodwin (H.), *Parish Sermons*, iv. 196.

Horne (C. S.), *The Model Citizen*, 136.

Meyer (F. B.), *The Directory of the Devout Life*, 179.

Pearson (A.), *Christus Magister*, 249.

Rutherford (J. S.), *The Seriousness of Life*, 97.

Sadler (T.), *Sermons for Children*, 93.

Secker (T.), *Sermons*, vii. 243.

Smith (W. C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 292.

Snell (H. H.), *Through Study Windows*, 27.

Swing (D.), *Truths for To-Day*, i. 31.

Talmage (T. de W.), *Sermons*, v. 144.

Christian World Pulpit, xiii. 12 (E. W. Shalders); xliv. 329 (E. A. Lawrence).

Church of England Pulpit, xlviii. 13 (J. Reid).

Churchman's Pulpit: Sermons to the Young, xvi. 472 (C. E. Kennaway).

Twentieth-Century Pastor, xxxii. (1912–13) 130 (N. D. Hillis).

The Golden Rule.

All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.—Matt. vii. 12.

1. Perhaps no days have been more ingenious and industrious than our own in the endeavour to discover working principles and methods for everyday conduct. One that aroused much interest was contained in the phrase, "What would Jesus do?" It is a noble question, but its defect for the purpose for which it is devised is that the answer is not always either easy or obvious. It is an old instruction in dealing with your neighbour to put yourself in his place. It is a less easy thing, if you come to think of it, to put somebody else in your place. And when that somebody else is one no less august and unique than the Lord Christ Himself, the problem is not simplified. It seems sometimes as if this eagerness for a new formula of conduct springs from despair of the old. But perhaps it would be truer and fairer to say that it springs from ignorance of the old, springs from failure really to grasp and clearly to investigate the content of the old. There is no need to discover any new formula for the regulation of conduct. All legal and prophetic, all casuistical and spiritual wisdom still stands summarized and complete in the Golden Rule. It is the pith and marrow of all ethics; and obedience to it is the final achievement of all religion.

2. The word "therefore" in the text would seem to give it a connexion with what precedes, and it will be instructive to inquire the meaning of this connexion. Now if we look at the context, we shall find that at the seventh verse of the chapter the Lord commenced a new division of His sermon, of which division the text is the conclusion. He is speaking of prayer. He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be

opened unto you"; and then He goes on to enforce the duty of prayer by reference to our own conduct towards our children, drawing the very plain conclusion that, if we with all our infirmities still answer our children's prayers, much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him: up to this point all is clear and easy, but then follow apparently somewhat abruptly the words of the text, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." How do these words hang on to the preceding part of the discourse? We shall understand this if we observe that in the exhortation to prayer in the context our Lord is in reality only taking up a point in the former part of His sermon; it is in the preceding chapter that He first introduces the subject of prayer, and in it He not only gives directions concerning prayer in general, but utters that particular form of prayer which has been used by His disciples ever since, known as the Lord's Prayer. Now if we look to this prayer, and then regard the clause of which the text forms the last verse as a recurrence to the same subject, we shall be able to understand why Christ began His Golden Rule with a "therefore," and so made it to hang upon what He had already said: for our Lord teaches us in His prayer to make our own conduct towards our brethren the measure of the grace which we venture to ask of God: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us,"—forgive us *so*, and only *so*—and this being the ground upon which we ask for forgiveness of sins, it is not to be much wondered at that He who taught us thus to pray should also teach us to be careful, lest our own conduct should condemn us and prevent our prayers from being heard; in fact, if we pray to God to deal with us as we deal with others, it is a necessary caution that we should be taught to deal with our neighbours as we would wish them to deal with us.

¶ The principle here enunciated is *fundamental*, underpinning the whole structure of human society. It is *equitable*, because all men are more nearly on an equality than might be inferred from a consideration of their outward circumstances. It is *portable*, "like the two-foot rule" which the artisan carries in his pocket for the measurement of any work which he may be called to estimate. The Emperor Severus was so charmed by the excellence of this rule that he ordered a crier to repeat it whenever he had

occasion to punish any person, and he caused it to be inscribed on the most notable parts of the palace, and on many of the public buildings.[1]

I.

The History of the Precept.

1. The words of the text are old and familiar. We learn from our infancy to say, "My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me." All Christians accept this as an elementary and fundamental maxim of their religion. But not only are these words not new to ourselves in this age of Chistendom; they were by no means altogether new to the world when our Lord spoke them. Parallels to them can be found in heathen philosophers, in the sacred books of other religions. The maxim may justly be regarded as human and universal, rather than as specifically Christian.

Christ not only did not claim for the precept any originality, but He expressly disclaimed it; He gave this as the sanction of the rule, that it was "the law and the prophets," that is to say, that all the precepts which had been given of old concerning our conduct one towards another were briefly comprehended in this one saying, that we should do to all men as we would that they should do to ourselves; the Lord gave this as a key to the whole, and would have us to understand that if we once master this great principle, and make it the real principle of our conduct, all particular duties will be easily, and as a matter of course, performed. And so St. Paul represents the matter. He says, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." What Christ did, then, was to bring together scattered duties under one general head and supply a principle which should be applicable to them all.

[1] F. B. Meyer, *The Directory of the Devout Life*, 179.

¶ In Confucius this Divine instinct of the soul began to break forth in history. He said, "You must not do to others what you would not they should do to you." This was only a refrain. It was a rule telling us what to avoid doing. The grand old Plato went further, and in a kind of prayer says, in the eleventh book of his Dialogues, "May I, being of sound mind, do to others as I would that they should do to me."[1]

¶ A Gentile inquirer—so the Talmudic story runs—came one day to the great Shammai, and demanded to be taught the law, condensed to a sentence, while he stood on one foot. In anger the Rabbi smote him with his staff and turned away, and the questioner went to Hillel, and Hillel made answer, "Whatsoever thou wouldest that men should not do to thee, that do not thou to them. All our law is summed up in that." And the stranger forthwith became a proselyte. The best of the Scribes went no further than this negative goodness in their approaches to the teaching of our Lord. He teaches that love cannot be satisfied with this cold abstinence from harm-doing. Active, energetic benevolence is the only true outcome of a character which has yielded to, and been moulded by, the Divine bounty. Frigid negatives satisfy neither Law nor Gospel.[2]

2. Our Lord translated other men's negatives into God's positive. Hitherto, the Golden Rule among men had been in the merely negative form. "That which is hateful to thyself do not do to thy neighbour"; that is to say, if thou abstainest from certain gross injustices and iniquities, thou hast fulfilled the whole Law. It is not in such a saying as that that all the philanthropies and humanities of Christianity lie dormant. Those great beneficent systems and institutions with which Christian feeling has covered this land and so many others are not the outgrowth of a mere negative ambition to abstain from insulting or injuring one's neighbours. It was Christ's genius that translated the negatives of religion into the positives. With Him the "thou shalt nots" of the Decalogue became the positive constructive doctrine of the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount.

Each time that we turn to the Gospels we find ourselves awed, commanded, moved, as by no other morality. We know nothing deeper, nothing more universal, nothing more practical, than the laws of human conduct which our Lord clothed in

[1] D. Swing, *Truths for To-Day*, i. 34.
[2] A. Pearson, *Christus Magister*, 261.

language intelligible and impressive to His Galilean hearers. The gospel morality needs no championship; it only needs to be understood and felt. It has much that is manifestly higher than what human wisdom unenlightened by the gospel has ever suggested; but it also welcomes and justifies and exalts every good idea which has appeared to be independent of it.

¶ By universal consent, if Jesus has any rival it is Buddha; by common consent also Sir Edwin Arnold is the man who went through all the Indian literature, sifted out the straw and the chaff, gathered up every grain of wheat he could find, and gave it to us in that poem, *The Light of Asia.* Then a few years later Sir Edwin re-opened his New Testament, and after a year published *The Light of the World.* And lo, the disciple of Buddha reverses his judgment! With poetic licence Sir Edwin Arnold represents the Wise Men of the East as Buddhists, who brought their gold and frankincense and offerings to the infant King, and left them, and journeyed back to the Ganges. Then, when two-score years had passed, one of the Wise Men, still living, retraced his steps, fascinated by that memory of the wonderful child. In his travels he meets Mary Magdalene, and hears the tragic story of the life and death of Jesus.

After long brooding upon Christ's words, the aged Indian priest puts the Light of the World over against the Light of Asia. First, Jesus is infinitely superior, because, until Christ spake, "never have we known before wisdom so packed and perfect as the Lord's, giving that Golden Rule with which this earth were heaven." And, second, he finds that Buddha held life was one long sorrow; but "right joyous, though, is Christ's doctrine, glad 'mid life's sad changes and swift vicissitudes, and death's unshunned and hard perplexities"; for over against the despair, the gloom and the pessimism that makes Buddha propose extinction and a dreamless sleep stands the piercing joyousness and outbreaking "gladsomeness of the life of Jesus." And, third, the old Buddhist finds another round in the golden ladder; if Buddha wrapped the universe in darkness and gloomy mystery, "thy teacher doth wrap us round in glorious folds with mighty name of love, and biddeth us believe, not law, not faith, hath moulded what we are, and built the worlds, but living, regnant love," for the fury of unharnessed, natural laws, the ferocity of fate, gives way before the advancing footprints of a Father of life and love. Then comes the priest's final confession. "My teacher bade us toil over dead duties, and brood above slain affections, until we reached Nirvana; yours, to love one's neighbours as one's self,

and save his soul by losing heed of it, in needful care that all his doings profit men and help the sorrowful to hope, the weak to stand."

> Oh, nearer road, and new! By heart to see
> Heaven closest in this earth we walk upon,
> God plainest in the brother whom we pass,
> Best solitudes 'midst busy multitudes,
> Passions o'ercome when Master-passion springs
> To serve, and love, and succour.[1]

II.

Its Scope.

1. The rule does not cover all behaviour and all conduct. It has nothing to say of a man's private attitude and relation to God. It has nothing to say of our behaviour when we are alone —in those times when some men and women are conscious of least responsibility, because their thoughts, desires, or actions do not bring them into any sort of contact with other people. It is therefore not in the nature of spiritual discipline; it is not given to regulate the secret inner life of a man's thoughts and feelings. It applies to a man's dealings with his fellows, the multitudinous occasions when the orbit of his life intersects the orbits of other lives, and these other orbits intersect his; and thus it clearly contemplates that the life of the Christian will be a life necessarily rich in social duties and responsibilities and opportunities.

¶ Froude, in his *Erasmus*, relates a curious incident in the life of Ignatius Loyola. Loyola, one day, met with a copy of the New Testament. He took it up, opened it, and began to read it. But after a short time he threw it down, because, he said, "it checked his devotional emotions." Froude thinks it very likely did. He found here a religion taught the supreme expression of which was in absolute righteousness, truth, and charity. "If any man deemeth himself to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, is not just, fair, honourable, open, merciful, that man's religion is vain." Loyola said this sort of thing checked his devotional emotions! Well, if so, it was high time they were checked. For they were running to seed, and not growing, under due discipline,

[1] N. D. Hillis.

to flower and fruit. In the religion of Jesus, the ethical, the practical, is the ultimate. To keep the Golden Rule is to fulfil the Law and the prophets.[1]

2. Like other general precepts, it will not bear to be taken slavishly in the letter. The worth of a precept is rather to suggest a temper or attitude of mind than to determine precisely what in a given case ought to be done. It is a superficial and therefore a bad morality, not merely defective, but unwholesome and misleading, that attempts to prescribe for conduct by precise regulations. Human life is too free and various to be governed by such methods. You may, without any great ingenuity, imagine cases in which it would be undesirable and wrong to carry out literally our Lord's injunction, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Perhaps the most obvious instance is flattery. There are tens of thousands of people who flatter their fellow-men because they like it and expect it themselves. And on the principle that you are simply to do to others what you wish them to do to you, it is unexceptionable. Clearly the criticism is that you ought not to wish for flattery yourself; in other words, to make the Golden Rule adequate and true, we must have some guarantee that what we wish to receive from others is what we ought so to wish.

But there is a far more difficult case for the application of the Golden Rule than this. Suppose that you have fallen into some gross sin, and incurred a very severe punishment, what may we assume you would wish that men should do to you? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the answer would be, "Let me off the penalty." Are we, then, to go on to assume that it is your duty to remit all punishment, however deserved, because of your sense that you would wish it to be remitted if you were in the wrong-doer's place? The social conscience has said No; the Christian conscience says No. It is not a question of what you might happen to wish if you were simply an irresponsible and religiously uneducated being, but of what you would wish if you were subject to the spirit and discipline of Christianity. In this latter case you would wish that your sin should be punished, your offences corrected; and consequently you would not do to others an

[1] C. S. Horne, *The Model Citizen*, 140.

injustice and call it mercy, because you were weak enough to desire it for yourself.

III.

Its Standard of Duty.

1. The Golden Rule surpasses all formulas of justice by bringing the case before our loving, trembling, sensitive self, and begging that it be tried in the light and justice of all this light of self-love, self-joy, and self-agony. We know how near and dear a thing one's own self is. The moment we step away from our consciousness we lose our mental grasp upon the phenomenon of right or wrong. We can look upon a suffering man, sick or wounded, with comparative peace, because our knowledge will not travel away from our own consciousness. We may say, "Poor man, poor child, we pity you," but we are so cut off from his pain that an infinite gulf lies between our feelings and the sufferer's agony. But let that pain, that sickness, that dying, come to self, and how quickly the heart measures all the depths of the new sorrow.

¶ It was reported that one of the victims of the Cuban massacre offered a million dollars if the savages would spare his life. The death of others, the common calamities of life had not filled with tremor that heart naturally brave; the grief of death at large had been, as it were, spoken in a foreign language not to be understood by him, but now the grim monster was coming up against self, it was his heart that was to be pierced with balls, not yours, nor mine, but his own, bound to earth, to friends, to country, to home and its loved ones; his was to pour out its blood and sink into the awful mystery of the grave. This was the vivid measurement of things that made the hero try to buy sunshine and home and sweet life with gold. When it comes to any adequate measurement of life's ills or joys, the only line which man can lay down upon the unknown is the consciousness within, the verdict of this inner self.[1]

2. It has consequently been alleged that this precept falls short, as a rule of morality, of what the inspiring principle of a

[1] D. Swing, *Truths for To-Day*, i. 39.

good man's life ought to be, and what the best men, in their better moments, have really aimed at. It puts, to a man's heart and conscience, his fellow-men only on the same level as himself. It seems to start from a regard for self, to recognize the claims of self. It is a nobler morality—this is what has been alleged—that calls upon men to love their neighbours not merely as well as, but better than, themselves. To live for others, quite suppressing and subordinating self, may be the high ideal, the inspiring principle, of a good man's efforts. Such a man should think, not "How should I wish my neighbour to behave towards me?" but "How can I serve my neighbour? How can I do most good, regardless of my own pleasure or interest, to those around me?"

Of course the general feeling is that the laws of conduct laid down in the Gospels are only too high, too exacting; that they require to be toned down and qualified before they can be applied to the practice of ordinary life. The morality of the Sermon on the Mount has been regarded as something exceptional, something ethereal, that might have suited the first disciples or the saints in later ages who have retired from the world, but "too good for human nature's daily food." And Christian expositors have generally felt called upon to show that the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven, as laid down by the Lord Jesus in these discourses, were essentially such as men might act upon and ought to act upon, though they may seem to enjoin an almost romantic or chimerical suppression of self and superiority to the world. Still, it is possible to argue that to love my neighbour as myself and to do to him as I should wish him to do to me, is a rule which assumes that I am caring for myself, and which does not aim at doing more than placing my neighbour on a level with myself in my estimate of his claims upon me.

The answer is that the disciple of Jesus Christ is not only to love his neighbour as himself, but to love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. And this latter commandment, the first and great one, has much to do with a man's relations to his fellow-men. It would, we might almost say, be enough of itself, if the second were not, for the sake of explicitness, added to it.

¶ "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is the first and great commandment. Nothing comes before first,

and nothing can get before this—nothing can take its place. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour"; but you cannot get to the second until you have taken in the first. The essential thing in religion is loving God, loving God in Jesus Christ. Religion begins here. A gospel of love for men, with no antecedent love for God, is a gospel without life. But the second commandment must always follow the first. Both are essential. As love for man counts for nothing if there be not first love for God, so love for God, if there be no love for man, is not genuine. The fountain of religion is always the love of God in us. But if there be the fountain, the well of water springing up in us, there will also be streams of water pouring out, rivers flowing forth, to cheer, refresh, and bless the land.

> While I love my God the most, I deem
> That I can never love you overmuch:
> I love Him more, so let me love you, too.
> Yea, as I understand it, love is such,
> I cannot love you if I love not Him;
> I cannot love Him if I love not you.[1]

(1) In the first place we notice that this standard imposes upon us the duty of doing justice to our neighbour. The desire for justice is so universal that we may call it an instinct of human nature. What is history, as we find it in every age, but one long series of efforts to obtain justice? These efforts have been among the strongest of all motive powers towards moral, social, political, and religious progress. To-day we are often told that we are living in the midst of a social movement of almost world-wide scope, and we are also told that the chief cause of this movement, the force of which is the principal factor in its momentum, is "a passionate desire for justice." This is probably true; but it is also true that apparently many of those who are taking a leading part in the movement have by no means a clear idea of the exact nature of justice, and that they have a still less clear conception of the conditions which must be fulfilled in order to obtain it. History teaches us that far too often justice appears to mean the redressing of any injustice which people themselves may suffer, by inflicting some injustice upon others. Thus the object is defeated by the means employed to attain it.

To dispense justice one must be possessed of the cultivated

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Blossom of Thorns*, 224.

attributes of manhood. A kind heart and a desire to do good are a very insufficient equipment with which to take our neighbour's affairs into our own hands. We require far more equipment than these, if we are to treat him with the justice which is his due. What we must remember is that the text requires a very strong qualification, one doubtless assumed by Christ, and one which must not be forgotten by us. Thus it should be read, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you (if you were equipped with full knowledge to perceive and skill as perfect as possible to decide what was best for you), even so do also unto them, for to enable you to do this is the purpose and the object of the whole course of Divine revelation."

¶ The one divine work, the one ordered sacrifice is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. . . . Do justice to your brother (you can do that whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him, because you don't love him, and you will come to hate him.[1]

¶ When Napoleon, with his companions, was climbing the steep defile of St. Helena they met a peasant with a bundle of faggots upon his head. The aide-de-camp signalled to the peasant to step aside. But Napoleon rebuked his officer, exclaiming, "Respect the burden! Respect the burden!" It was the sense of justice that was voiced in these words of the soldier, for Napoleon had been himself a peasant boy, and he wished to do to a burden-bearer that which he had asked others to do for him when as a child he carried his bundle of faggots down the mountain side.[2]

(2) But, in the second place, the Christian must not draw the line at justice; he must exercise mercy and forbearance. God has made us neighbours of hundreds and thousands in this land—the poor, the degraded, the unattractive; the crippled and the handicapped, the diseased and the infirm; children sufferers, adult sufferers; lives suddenly broken, seemingly spoiled and ruined by accident, lives suddenly menaced by internal disorder, bright lives blighted, strong lives emaciated. We think of some for whom life has suddenly resolved itself into a condemned cell, with nothing to look forward to but dying; the great army of the incurable waiting, some with smiles of brave anticipation, some with sobs of weakness and despair, the inevitable hour. Yes,

[1] Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, § 39 (*Works*, xviii. 420).
[2] N. D. Hillis.

God has made these our neighbours. And *if we were in their place!* If we were the condemned, the pain-stricken, the crippled, the diseased, and they were here to-day in our places, in health and hope, what should we wish that men should do for us? The question answers itself. We should long that all that skill and care and comfort and kindness can do should be done for us in our lamentable lot. If a man lives a dissolute life, and nature begins to exact her penalties and wrecks the physical frame, we maintain a costly staff of physicians and an expensive system of hospitals to stand between that man and the direct consequences of his evil living. Logically, that is indefensible. But there are higher principles in life than the merely logical. And we have concluded that life is so sacred, and its opportunities are so precious, that we will direct all our skill and all our care to enlarging and extending life's opportunities for every man, even for the worst.

¶ There are vessels on our seas that bear an ill name, and have an evil notoriety. But let the worst of these run upon the rocks, and the men of your lifeboats will not stay to haggle about character and deserts. They will do for the worst what they would do for the best. Such is the inspiring influence of our Christian conception. Christ Himself died for an evil world that was in peril of shipwreck.[1]

3. It is not too much to say that the spirit of the Golden Rule created a new atmosphere for the world. But it needed to be illumined and reinforced, and this our Lord proceeded to do. If the Golden Rule is the high-water mark of the other teaching, it is the lowest round in the ladder which Christ begins to climb. Where the other teachers stopped on the hill of aspiration and difficulty, Jesus begins, and rushes on and up to hitherto undreamed-of heights. At the beginning of His ministry He said, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." After three years of self-abnegating service He parted the curtains, and showed them the heights where perfect love had her dwelling-place, from which she beckoned men out of the low plains of selfishness up to the realms where perfect truth and beauty have their dwelling-place. "A new commandment I give unto you"—that abrogates that lower Golden Rule—"that ye love one another, as I have loved you." The Golden Rule was a mere embodiment of absolute

[1] C. S. Horne, *The Model Citizen*, 148.

justice; Christ proposes to break the alabaster box of love unmerited and undeserved. "As I have loved you"—what word is this? For three years He had shown them the pattern of earth's most glorious friendship. Jesus has not done unto the Twelve simply and alone what He would have the Twelve do unto Him. He has done more. Peter denies His Master, and Jesus stretches forth His hand and draws Peter up out of the abyss, and gives the sceptre of power and the keys of influence into Peter's hand.

¶ The solid blocks or tables on which the Ten Commandments were written were of the granite rock of Sinai, as if to teach us that all the great laws of duty to God and duty to man were like that oldest primeval foundation of the world—more solid, more enduring than all the other strata; cutting across all the secondary and artificial distinctions of mankind; heaving itself up, now here, now there; throwing up the fantastic crag, there the towering peak, here the long range which unites or divides the races of mankind. That is the universal, everlasting character of Duty. But as that granite rock itself has been fused and wrought together by a central fire, without which it could not have existed at all, so also the Christian law of Duty, in order to perform fully its work in the world, must have been warmed at the heart and fed at the source by a central fire of its own—and that central fire is Love—the gracious, kindly, generous, admiring, tender movements of the human affections; and that central fire itself is kept alive by the consciousness that there has been in the world a Love beyond all human love, a devouring fire of Divine enthusiasm on behalf of our race, which is the Love of Christ, which is of the inmost essence of the Holy Spirit of God. It is not contrary to the Ten Commandments. It is not outside of them, it is within them; it is at their core; it is wrapped up in them, as the particles of the central heat of the globe were encased within the granite tables in the Ark of Temple.[1]

[1] A. P. Stanley, *History of the Church of Scotland*, 8.

Choosing a Road.

LITERATURE.

Bersier (E.), *Twelve Sermons*, 19.
Blunt (J. J.), *Plain Sermons*, i. 337.
Campbell (J. M.), *Sermons and Lectures*, i. 41.
Chafer (L. S.), *True Evangelism*, 54.
Dods (M.), *Christ and Man*, 200.
Goodrich (A.), in *The Sermon on the Mount*, iii. 195.
Gunsaulus (F. W.), *Paths to the City of God*, 70.
Hutton (J. A.), *At Close Quarters*, 181.
Jones (J. D.), *The Unfettered Word*, 101.
McAfee (C. B.), *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 163.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: Matthew i.–viii., 342.
Macpherson (W. M.), *The Path of Life*, 64.
Manning (H. E.), *Sermons*, i. 77.
Matheson (G.), *Messages of Hope*, 42.
Morison (J.), *A Practical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 110.
Parker (J.), *The City Temple*, ii. 169.
Pearson (A.), *Christus Magister*, 264.
Pierson (A. T.), *The Making of a Sermon*, 54.
Raleigh (A.), *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, 62.
Smith (W. C.), *The Sermon on the Mount*, 308.
Southouse (A. J.), *The Men of the Beatitudes*, 203.
Stuart (A. M.), *The Path of the Redeemed*, 1.
Tait (A.), *The Charter of Christianity*, 565.
Thorne (H.), *Notable Sayings of the Great Teacher*, 49.
Wilson (R.), *The Great Salvation*, 185.
Christian World Pulpit, xliii. 6 (D. M. Ross); liv. 136 (M. Dods); lvii. 113 (J. Stalker); lix. 171 (C. Gore).

Choosing a Road.

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.—Matt. vii. 13, 14.

1. There is a certain inevitable movement of human beings implied in the whole of this passage. Our Lord regards the multitudes around Him as all in motion—none quiescent, none fixed and centred. This transiency and mutability of human life can neither be doubted nor denied. We are not dwellers, we are travellers. We are all on the way, staff in hand, loins girt, the dust on our sandals.

> And the myriad feet are echoing that trod the way before
> In a vague and restless music evermore.

Ahead of us there is the cloud of a vast company travelling; behind, the clamour of those who follow in our track; each one pressing forward, never resting, not in sleep, not in daytime, not in stillest night.

2. Similarly, moral progress is also constant. This is a far more serious and important kind of progress. If we could stay our *spirits* amid this universal vicissitude, and keep them in fixed conditions, the outward change would be of less moment. But the moral progress is as constant as, and infinitely more important than, any change that can be apprehended by the senses. This is the tremendous thing, that each one of us is being saved or lost, that each one is putting on the image of God, the eternal beauty, and wearing more and more the everlasting strength, or losing both, falling into vileness and weakness, although it may be by slow or even imperceptible degrees. It is a solemn thought that the one process or the other is going on in every one of us, without the intermission of a day or an hour. Our souls as well

as our bodies are on pilgrimage; our spirits as well as our feet are on the way. And here the question arises: What way? How many are there to choose from? Two; only two. The way of the many or the way of the few.

I.

The Way of the Many.

The world speaks of numerous ways. It specially favours a *via media*. But here our Lord, with more than a touch of austerity in His tone, declares there is no middle way. He puts the antithesis sharply and nakedly. There is a wide gate, and there is a narrow gate; there is a broad way, and there is a straitened way; and there are just two ends, destruction and life. At one or other of these ends every man shall arrive, and what end it will be depends upon the road he travels.

1. *The entrance is wide.*—We have taken the broad way first, if for no other reason than that it *is* the broad way. It is the most manifest and obtrusive, and the nearest to us naturally. Let us begin at the beginning of it. It has a gate. A gate is a place of entrance—to a city, or a field, or a country. As a religious term it means the beginning of a course or onward career. Being a figure, there is no need to attach to it a narrow inelastic meaning, but it does point to the great moral truth that there are critical and decisive points in life to which men come. There are gates of decision, narrow or wide, through which they pass into the course that lies within. It might indeed be said that we enter upon the broad way when we are born: that birth is the wide gate, and natural life the broad way. There is truth in that; but it is only a half truth. It is also true that we may be born in the narrow way, may pass, as it were, through the strait gate in our nurture as infants; we may tread the narrow way in our Christian training, and leave it only by our own act and choice. Manifestly, our Lord is not entering here upon that question. He is speaking to reasonable and responsible men of their acts of choice, in the decisive times and places in life. He is speaking of the entering in at either gate of those who know

that they so enter. And yet the knowledge may not be very express or clear. From want of reflection, from want of observance of the real character and consequences of things, men may go on from youth to age without being aware that they pass through "gates" at all. They live as they list, or as they can. They take life as it comes, and they are not conscious of points of transition. They see no gates in life, pass through none to their own consciousness. To-day is as yesterday, and to-morrow will be as to-day! All this is consistent with the spirit of the passage "*wide is the gate.*" One may go through it and hardly know it is there. No one needs to jostle another in passing through. No one needs to ruffle his garments or to lay anything aside or to leave anything behind; no one needs to part from his companions; all can enter together, for the gate is wide.

¶ The pangs of pity which Dante's sensitive soul feels for the forlorn and tormented spirits in the *Inferno* serve to show how intense is his conviction that nothing can set aside the laws of eternal right. Francesca will arouse in him infinite and overwhelming compassion, but Francesca must face the withering tempest which her fault has aroused against her. Mr. J. A. Symonds expressed his wonder that Dante should be so hard and pitiless in his judgment upon the weaklings who hesitated to identify themselves on either side in the great battle of all time. Others may have felt that the harsh contempt expressed by the poet was out of proportion to a fault which might be called weakness, but never vice; but to Dante the cowardice which refused the call of high duty or noble ideal was sin almost beyond forgiveness: it revealed a spirit dead to righteousness through the paralysing influence of self-interest.[1]

2. *The way is broad.*—If there is amplitude even at the entrance, or at the critical points of life when the gates are passed, we may well expect that there will be space, and allowance, and freedom in the way. All kinds of persons may walk in it. The man of the world may work out his schemes, gather his money, and achieve his position. The pleasure-seeker may eat and drink and dance and sleep and sing. The sensual man who kills his moral life and vilifies the Divine image within him may pass on unchecked. The formalist may count his beads and say his prayers. The Pharisee may draw his garments

[1] W. Boyd Carpenter, *The Spiritual Message of Dante*, 33.

away from the sinner's touch. The sceptic may think his doubting thoughts; and the crowds of persons who never think, who live without a purpose, who do good or evil as the case may be, may all find a place here.

¶ There is a wide gate. It opens into a broad way. But the broad way leads to destruction. The idea of an enclosure, a place enclosed within a wall, lies at the basis of the representation. One might have supposed, from the spacious entrance, that the way would conduct to some magnificent home, a palace of beauty and of bliss. But no. It leads to *destruction*, to some kind of everlasting death. What may this broad way be, with its wide gate? It is doubtless the way of self-licence, of that self-gratification which is determined to take a wide berth for itself, spurning Divine prohibitions, and laughing at the limits of a strict and narrow morality. It is the way of things that is counter to the way and will of Christ. There were many in Christ's day "entering in through it." There are still many. The multitude still goes that way. He who would be a Christian must still be somewhat singular in his habits and manner of life.[1]

3. *It leads to destruction.*—All who journey upon the broad way come at last to its conclusion. And what do they find? Life? Happiness? Peace? They find destruction. Destruction! Destruction of our higher sentiments, of the peace of our conscience, of the life of our spirit! Destruction of our faith, our love, our hope, of our character, of our soul. Destruction! The pains of the final condemnation of God, of banishment from His presence into the darkness unutterable, into the penal fires of self-reproach and remorse.

By a natural law man leans towards destruction. It may be called the gravitation of a fallen being. Let a man only be at ease in himself, satisfied with what he is, and consent to the usurping customs of the world, drawing in the unwholesome breath of refined evil, and letting his moral inclination run its natural course, without check or stay, and he will most surely tide onward, with an easy and gentle motion, down the broad current to eternal death. Such a man is seldom strongly tempted. The less marked solicitations of the tempter are enough. The suggestion of a great sin might rouse his conscience, and scare him from the toils. We may take this, then, as a most

[1] James Morison.

safe rule, that a feeling of security is a warning to be suspicious, and that our safety is to feel the stretch and the energy of a continual strife.

¶ There is an extraordinary confirmation of His teaching about the broad way in the attitude of those who among ourselves have rejected Christ and His laws. Their thought tends to Pessimism; and so far as they believe anything, they believe in extinction—*i.e.*, the broad path leading to destruction. What is the attitude of Nietzsche or Max Nordau in Germany? or of Daudet, Loti, Guyau in France? or of Björnsen and Ibsen in Norway? The way of Jesus is surrendered or rejected, and blank destruction stares the thinker in the face.[1]

¶ There is in man an instinct of revolt, an enemy of all law, a rebel which will stoop to no yoke, not even that of reason, duty, and wisdom. This element in us is the root of all sin. The independence which is the condition of individuality is at the same time the eternal temptation of the individual. That which makes us beings makes us also sinners. Sin is, then, in our very marrow, it circulates in us like the blood in our veins, it is mingled with all our substance. Or rather I am wrong: temptation is our natural state, but sin is not necessary. Sin consists in the voluntary confusion of the independence which is good with the independence which is bad.[2]

But two ways are offered to our will—
Toil, with rare triumph, Ease, with safe disgrace;
Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance!
The man's whole life preludes the single deed
That shall decide if his inheritance
Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,
Or with the unnoticed herd that only sleep and feed.

II.

The Way of the Few.

In reading the Gospels one is often struck with what, for lack of a better term, one might call Christ's *frankness*. He makes no secret of the conditions of discipleship. He does not attempt to deck the Christian life out in gay and attractive colours. On the

[1] R. F. Horton, *The Commandments of Jesus*, 227.
[2] *Amiel's Journal.*

contrary, He scores and underlines and emphasizes its hardships and difficulties. He wants no man to follow Him under the impression that he is going to have a pleasant and easy time of it. And so at the very beginning He confronts him with the "narrow gate" of an exacting demand. "If any man would come after me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Self-denial and the cross—these constitute the "narrow gate" by which a man enters upon the service of Jesus Christ.

1. *The entrance is narrow.*—Like the broad way, this way of the few has, at its outset, a gate. It is a narrow gate and may be taken as expressing the initial act of repentance and the commencement of a life dedicated to Christ. The entrance into the Christian life may aptly be described as a narrow gate, for it is a definite and decisive act into which one is not likely to drift with a multitude by chance. Like a narrow gate, it may easily be overlooked; and the main difficulty of the Christian life is perhaps that it escapes notice altogether. Multitudes of people seem not to have so much as heard that there is a Christian life. They follow the broad path because it is broad, and they never notice that unostentatious entrance into the way of life, repentance and faith. But, while it is narrow, the gate is broad enough for entrance, always provided that one is content to enter stripped and unburdened.

The entrance into the way of life is by the strait gate of penitence and renunciation. If men could carry the world along with them, if young people could carry their love of pleasure along with them, multitudes would crowd into the gate of the Kingdom. But to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof is too hard a command. To put away the old man with his deeds is more than they can bring themselves to do. The gate is "narrow." That is why Christ added that solemn word, "Few there be that find it."

¶ "Thou didst send for me," said Savonarola to Lorenzo the Magnificent, the tyrant of Florence, as he lay on his dying bed. "Yes," said Lorenzo, "for three sins lie heavy on my soul," and then he told the monk how he was tortured by the remembrance of the sack of Volterra, and his robbery of a bank whereby many poor girls had lost their all and been driven to a life of shame,

and the bloody reprisals he took after a political conspiracy against him. "God is good," replied Savonarola, "God is merciful. But," he at once added, "three things are needful." "What things?" asked Lorenzo anxiously. "First, a great and living faith in God's mercy." "I have the fullest faith in it," replied the dying man. "Secondly, you must restore all your ill-gotten wealth." At this Lorenzo writhed, but at last he gave a nod of assent. "Lastly," said Savonarola to the cowering prince, "you must restore to Florence her liberty." And Lorenzo angrily turned his back upon the preacher and said never a word. The gate was too "narrow."[1]

2. *The way also is narrow.*—The word used by the Revisers here is "straitened." The figure contemplated is that of "double-dykes." There is a path between two properties, each measured off with its wall. Both walls approach as closely and compressingly as possible to the centre of the thoroughfare, which is the public "right of way." The "double-dykes" almost meet, and there is, at points here and there, bulging on either side, while all along loose stones have fallen down, and make the way inconvenient, so that the traveller can only painfully and with trouble pick his steps as he moves along. It leads, however, *to life*, that is, *to everlasting life, to the home of everlasting bliss.* Being a narrowed way, it will not admit of latitudinarianism of demeanour. Neither will it admit of accompanying parade and pomp. It would not be possible to drive along it in a coach and six. When kings would go by it they must step out of their coaches and walk. Princes and peasants must travel there on an equality. What is this narrow way? When we get down, through the envelopments of imagery, to the real base or essential substrate of the representations, we hear the voice of Jesus Himself saying, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father" (or "to the Father's house") "but by me" (John xiv. 6). As the martyr Philpot said, "The cross-way is the high-way to heaven." There is no other way.

¶ The word Strait, applied to the entrance into Life, and the word Narrow, applied to the road of Life, do not mean that the road is so fenced that few can travel it, however much they wish (like the entrance to the pit of a theatre), but that, for each person, it is at first so stringent, so difficult, and so dull, being

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 106.

between close hedges, that few *will* enter it, though all *may*. In a second sense, and an equally vital one, it is not merely a Strait, or narrow, but a straight, or right road; only, in this rightness of it, not at all traced by hedges, wall, or telegraph wire, or even marked by posts higher than winter's snow; but, on the contrary, often difficult to trace among morasses and mounds of desert, even by skilful sight; and by blind persons, entirely untenable unless by help of a guide, director, rector, or rex: which you may conjecture to be the reason why, when St. Paul's eyes were to be opened, out of the darkness which meant only the consciousness of utter mistake, to seeing what way he should go, his director was ordered to come to him in the "street which is called Straight."[1]

(1) How is the way straitened? Did God make it so? The Bible recording that the one way is narrow and the other broad does not make them so, any more than a medical book recording smallpox makes smallpox to exist. The fact is, God has done His best to reverse these terrible facts. God has striven to make the way to the good broad, and the way to the evil narrow.

¶ "When I was a young man," says Dr. Albert Goodrich, "I taught in the ragged schools of London. On one Sunday I had this passage for my lesson. 'I say, teacher,' merrily sang one of those sharp, ragged boys, 'it says, don't it, the way to the good is narrow and the way to the bad wide?' 'Yes, it does,' I replied. 'I know that's true,' he said, with a knowing wink; 'but,' he added, dropping his voice, 'is it fair? Oughtn't God have made them both the same width? He'd have given us, then, a fair chance.'"

(2) Who or what, then, makes the two ways so different? It is not the will of God; it is the sin of man. Man's injustices to man, man's inhumanity to man, narrows the way. By hardness, by provoking one another, by tempting one another, we make the way narrow. Employers make it narrow to their employees; employees make it narrow to their employers. Children make it narrow to their parents; parents make it narrow to their children. What need there is to consider one another, lest we make the way to life even more narrow than it is.

¶ What is it, Augustine asks, which makes this gate so strait to us, and this way so narrow? It is not so much "*strait*" in

[1] Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 59 (*Works*, xxviii. 441).

itself, as that we make it strait for ourselves, by the swellings of our pride;—and then, vexed that we cannot enter, chafing and impatient at the hindrances we meet with, we become more and more unable to pass through. But where is the remedy? how shall these swollen places of our souls be brought down? By accepting and drinking of the cup, wholesome though it may be distasteful, of humility: by listening to and learning of Him who, having said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," does to them who inquire, "How shall we enter in?" reply, "By Me;" "I am the Way;" "I am the Door."[1]

3. *The narrow way leads to life.*—Life! The mind alive in truth, the heart alive with full affection, the conscience alive in the vision of duty, and the enjoyment of peace, the soul alive in joyous communion with God. Life! The activity of our finer faculties, the consciousness of their expansion, the enjoyment of achievement, of progress, of laying up imperishable treasure, the sense of wealth and power in truth and in God, the enjoyment of service with God for the coming of the Kingdom, the hope of the crown of life, of life regal, imperial, in and with God for ever. That is worth an effort to attain. That is worth the striving needful to walk the narrow way.

¶ Jesus here quotes an idea whereof the ancient moralists had made great use and which had passed into a commonplace, almost a proverb. It is as ancient as the poet Hesiod; and it appears in Kebes' quaint allegory *The Tablet*, a sort of Greek *Pilgrim's Progress*, purporting to be an account of a pictorial tablet which hung in the temple of Kronos and emblematically depicted the course of human life. Kebes saw it and had it explained to him by an old man who kept the temple.

"What is the way that leads to the true Instruction?" said I. "You see above," said he, "yonder place where no one dwells, but it seems to be desert?" "I do." "And a little door, and a way before the door, which is not much thronged, but very few go there; so impassable does the way seem, so rough and rocky?" "Yes, indeed," said I. "And there seems to be a lofty mound and a very steep ascent with deep precipices on this side and on that?" "I see it." "This, then, is the way," said he, "that leads to the true Instruction."

The allegory of the Two Ways had passed into a sort of proverb, and Jesus here applies it to the great business of salvation,

[1] R. C. Trench.

throwing His hearers back on the broad principles of life. It was recognized that, if a man would attain to Virtue or Wisdom, he must face a steep and toilsome way, and climb it with resolute heart. "All noble things," said the proverb, "are difficult"; and salvation, being the noblest of all, is the most difficult. It can be attained only by resolute endeavour, and every man must face the ordeal for himself. It is folly to stand gazing at the height and wondering whether few or many will win it. "There is the narrow gate!" cries Jesus; "yonder is the rugged path! Enter and climb."[1]

¶ While the writers of the New Testament vary in their mode of presenting the ultimate goal of man, they are at one in regarding it as an exalted form of *life*. What they all seek to commend is a condition of being involving a gradual assimilation to, and communion with, God. The distinctive gift of the gospel is the gift of life. "I am the life," says Christ. And the Apostle's confession is in harmony with his Master's claim—"For me to live is Christ." Salvation is nothing else than the restoration, preservation, and exaltation of life. . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. "More life and fuller" is the passion of every soul that has caught the vision and heard the call of Jesus. The supreme good consists not in suppressed vitality, but in power and freedom. Life in Christ is a full, rich existence. . . . The spiritual man pursues his way through conflict and achievement towards a higher and yet a higher goal, ever manifesting, yet ever seeking, the infinite that dwells in him. All knowledge and quest and endeavour, nay, existence itself, would be a mockery if man had no "forever." Scripture corroborates the yearnings of the heart and represents life as a growing good which is to attain to ever higher reaches and fuller realization in the world to come. It is the unextinguishable faith of man that the future must crown the present. No human effort goes to waste, no gift is delusive; but every gift and every effort has its proper place as a stage in the endless process.

"There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before."[2]

[1] D. Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, 302.

[2] A. B. D. Alexander, *Christianity and Ethics*, 128.

The Leper.

LITERATURE.

Burrell (D. J.), *Christ and Men*, 168.
Calthrop (G.), *The Future Life*, 256.
Davies (D.), *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, i. 21.
Gilbert (M. N.), in *Sermons on the Gospels*: Advent to Trinity, 119.
Howatt (J. R.), *Jesus the Poet*, 57.
Keble (J.), *Sermons for the Christian Year*: Christmas and Epiphany, 463.
Macduff (J. R.), *Memories of Gennesaret*, 51.
Mackennal (A.), *Christ's Healing Touch*, 1.
McNeill (J.), *Regent Square Pulpit*, iii. 313.
Magee (W. C.), *Growth in Grace*, 271.
Matheson (G.), *Thoughts for Life's Journey*, 16.
Parkhurst (C. H.), *A Little Lower than the Angels*, 39.
Power (P. B.), *The "I Wills" of Christ*, 67.
Raymond (G. L.), *The Spiritual Life*, 33.
Thompson (R. E.), *Nature, the Mirror of Grace*, 69.
Trench (R. C.), *Westminster and Other Sermons*, 15.
Wilberforce (B.), *The Power that Worketh in Us*, 54.
Williams (C. D.), *A Valid Christianity for To-Day*, 20.
Wilmot-Buxton (H. J.), *By Word and Deed*, 21.
Christian World Pulpit, liii. 48 (H. S. Holland); lxxx. 56 (H. E. Selwyn).
Churchman's Pulpit: Third Sunday after the Epiphany, iv. 52 (E. Palmer).
Clergyman's Magazine, 3rd Ser., xi. 20 (W. Burrows).

THE LEPER.

And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed.—Matt. viii. 2, 3.

1. THE disease of leprosy is scarcely known, except in a mild form, among ourselves; only those who have seen it in Eastern lands can realize its full horror and loathsomeness. And not even then unless they place themselves in intelligent sympathy with the ancient Hebrew point of view, and understand the mysterious dread and utter abhorrence which surrounded the person so afflicted. He was an accursed thing, under the ban of God, the pariah, the unapproachable. Writhing under the dread disease, he was lost to the world. His home was the caves among the rocks, his food the scanty pittance which he could gather in the fields or by the roadsides. Leprosy was held to be the mark of awful sin, the manifestation of God's special displeasure. Even if he recovered, he could not be restored without an elaborate ritual, which was supposed to cleanse him from the taint of disease, and to reconcile him to God. How horrible this all seems as we read and think about it. Yet we must realize it if we desire to appreciate fully all that the Saviour's touch and healing implied.

2. To approach the leper, to look upon him, to bend over him, to reach out the hand and touch him, required no common courage. There was such pollution in the act that the one doing it became ritually unclean. For a man to step across the awful chasm which yawned between the leper and society, to minister to his wants, to show him the way back to health and home, was braver than to face death on the battlefield. To the beholder it would be an evidence of utter recklessness, an open defiance of all

tradition and all law. Yet Christ, the Son of Man, did not hesitate for a moment. He did not come to set at naught the law, made sacred by Moses' decree and by long ages of use. It was not that. It was only a declaration, of which His wonderful life was so full, of the higher law which was from henceforth to govern the world; that higher law of the sympathy of the great Father with all manner of suffering and sorrow, that higher law which was to take the place of the narrow rule of Hebrew ritual, of the possibility of the restoration of every outcast by the acceptance of the help of the Saviour.

¶ Christ did not disregard the prohibition to touch the leper because He wanted to show His contempt for the statute. For Him the wealth of His own life repealed the statute. He was like a vessel riding the deep sea; all underlaid with rocks the sea may be, but for that vessel there are no rocks; the vastness of the deep waters on whose surface its course is swung practically obliterates the rocks, and bears the vessel forward in the confidence of infinite security.[1]

I.

The Cry for Cleansing.

"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

1. This is a confession of faith rather than a direct prayer. It expresses faith in the power of Christ. It is a grand thing when a leper can believe in anything besides his own misery. Probably this man had heard only at a distance (owing to the disabilities of his loathsome disease) of Christ's deeds of power, and had never been near enough to Him to hear the tender tones of that voice which had melting pity in it, or to trace the lines of gentleness and grace in His loving countenance. Besides, men learn sooner to trace power than to trace tenderness. The Red Sea and Sinai revealed God's power, but it took a millennium and a half longer for Calvary to reveal His love. The plea of the leper therefore is, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst." Did he accept the general belief that only God could heal the leper? Then there was the more faith in this admission of Christ's power.

[1] C. H. Parkhurst, *A Little Lower than the Angels*, 43.

¶ What a consciousness of might there was in Jesus! Others, prophets and apostles, have healed the sick, but their power was delegated. It came as in waves of Divine impulse, intermittent and temporary. The power that Jesus wielded was inherent and absolute, deeps which knew neither cessation nor diminution. Christ's will was supreme over all forces. Nature's potencies are diffused and isolated, slumbering in herb or metal, flower or leaf, in mountain or sea. But all are inert and useless until man distils them with his subtle alchemies, and then applies them by his slow processes, dissolving the tinctures in the blood, sending on its warm currents the healing virtue, if haply it may reach its goal and accomplish its mission. But all these potencies lay in the hand or in the will of Christ. The forces of life all were marshalled under His bidding. He had but to say to one "Go," and it went, here or there, or anywhither; nor does it go for nought; it accomplishes its high behest, the great Master's will.[1]

2. Now the exercise of faith must always precede healing. A certain moral temper there must be in the recipient, a certain spiritual outlook, a movement of trust, a personal desire of living interest that will go out from the soul towards the presence of Him who draws it into His mastery. These there must be if any virtue is to go out from Him. He moves along in silence, but His silence has power in it that can be felt, and it acts as a spiritual test of those on whom it falls. If they are in a moral condition to be helped, they become aware of the succour that is at hand. They feel about for what it means, they detect His personal supremacy. They have an impulse that goes out to Him; they put up a cry; they thrust out a hand to touch, if it may be, the hem of His garment. That act of theirs releases His force. Instantaneously and inevitably His life has passed into theirs. They are invaded by His strength; they are permeated by His vitality; they are quickened by His energy; they find themselves, by sheer and natural necessity, rising, walking, seeing, hearing. They could not do anything else. Surprise vanishes and wonder is slain. It is as simple as any other natural effect. They perfectly understand Him as He tells them that they had but to be in that condition and the thing is bound to happen—"Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Oft had the Master to pass inactive and helpless as poor

[1] H. Burton, *The Gospel of St. Luke*, 267.

maimed men sat in moody silence by the roadside, and never asked who He was, and never hoped for a hand to save. He saw many a leper go by engulfed in his own shame, never lifting his eyes to beg of Him a boon. He had to watch the stupid indifference of those whom misery had dulled and hardened into despair, and still He might not speak. He might not shake them out of their torpor; His mouth was closed; His hope must hold itself back. Why will not they understand? Why cannot they cry out? Just one whisper, "Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy upon us," and in a moment He would be free. He would be there at their side; His hand would have leaped out; His touch would have been upon them. The words would have rushed out willingly from his tongue, "I will; go in peace, for thy faith hath made thee whole."

¶ Just as the amazing resources of electricity lie all about us, quivering and inactive until we call out their capacities, so the vast pardon of God waits, and through its obedience to natural law must wait until the Master's touch has on it a human pressure. The leper must discover it, must draw upon it, must open himself to it, and then the power long repressed leaps out in an instant, rushes forward in free haste, in liberated gladness. It pours itself out upon him, it bathes him round, it seizes upon him, it possesses him. Not a moment is lost. Before his own appeal has died off his lips, "Lord, if thou wilt," the answer is upon him—it has already done its full work—"I will; be thou clean."[1]

¶ "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" is a prayer lovely in the simplicity of its human pleading—an appeal to the power which lay in the man to whom he spoke: His power was the man's claim; the relation between them was of the strongest—that between plenty and need, between strength and weakness, between health and disease—poor bonds comparatively between man and man, for man's plenty, strength, and health can only supplement, not satisfy, the need; support the weakness, not change it into strength; mitigate the disease of His fellow, not slay it with invading life; but in regard to God, all whose power is creative, any necessity of His creatures is a perfect bond between them and Him; His magnificence must flow into the channels of the indigence He has created.[2]

3. Why does the leper question the Saviour's *will*? It does not appear as if our Lord had as yet healed any leper; this man

[1] Canon Scott Holland.

[2] George MacDonald, *The Miracles of Our Lord*, 86.

is at any rate the first leper mentioned as coming to Him for healing. Then the poor man no doubt regarded his leprosy as a just judgment for the sins of which his conscience was afraid, and went about so humbled and ashamed that he hardly dared pray for deliverance. Besides, he might think (for so the Jews commonly thought) that there was no healing of leprosy except by miracle, by the immediate act of God Almighty Himself; and this again would make his request seem bolder. And so the wonder is, not that he questioned Jesus' will, but that he believed in His power. By believing in His power he threw himself upon the innermost tenderness of Christ's nature; and the whole being of our Lord answered to the call. There was no question of power to be solved or proved; the method of the appeal left no room for argument; the leper's words, as they passed into the depths of Christ's loving nature, which alone was invoked, cut a passage for themselves, through which the healing waters could flow. The response was instant—"if thou wilt"—"I will."

¶ Jesus did not treat slight ailments, only the most profound, obstinate, ghastly maladies. He did not concern Himself with simple aches and pains, but proved His Divine authority and efficacy in distinguishing leprosy, palsy, fever, blindness, and terrible psychic derangements. Numbers of reformers are prepared to deal with the superficial ailments of humanity—with its tooth-aches, sores, and scratches; but only One dares attack the deep, stubborn, chronic diseases of our nature, the fundamental evils of the race. He alone is the grand physician of the world-lazaretto, the healer of the incurable, despairing of no man. Let me, then, seek in Him for the grace that shall root out the most malign morbid humours of the soul. The darkest and deadliest elements of evil He can rebuke and expel. "Lord, that I might be clean!"[1]

II.

The Healing Touch.

"And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean."

1. "Touch is the sense which love employs." It means the annihilation of distance between one who loves and that which

[1] W. L. Watkinson,

he loves, so that mere nearness is replaced by contact. Our sense of the significance of touch finds expression in such phrases as "getting into touch," or "living in touch," with people. They stand for sympathetic contact, the sympathy which seeks contact, and does not keep others "at arm's length." Children learn it in their mothers' laps, and are never content to be merely near those they love without actually touching them.

A very little thing was this touch, even as an indication of kindly purpose, but it was just the little thing that a sensitive sick man needed. It is, after all, little things that indicate either sympathy or antipathy. "I will buy with you," says Shylock, "sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Had Jesus held aloof from the afflicted they never would have trusted Him. Nothing so pains a sick person as the sign of shrinking from him. Wear your gloves in any room you like, but not in the sick-room. Bend your ear to the trembling dying lips, and shun not to lay your hands on the diseased, if you are to do them any good, either as nurse or as spiritual adviser and Christian friend.

¶ We may be allowed to insert here a few words from an account sent to us of Dolling's influence with the rough youths of Landport by a lady (then Miss Nance, now Mrs. Cator) who managed a club for those fellows, under his sanction, when he was at S. Agatha's: "Mr. Dolling and S. Agatha's Mission was the only kind of religion that ever appealed to them, and I feel sure I could never have persuaded them to go and talk about their lives to anyone else. They said, 'Oh, he's different; we don't mind him.' I could tell of miracles of healing under Mr. Dolling's *touch*. One young soldier said to me, 'He laid his hand on my head, and, I don't know why, I told him all I had ever done.'"[1]

2. It would have been quite possible for our Lord to heal this leper by a word alone. It would be quite possible for God Almighty to say to all the moral lepers of the world, "Be thou clean!" and the cure would be Divinely perfect. Why, then, does He not? Just because the cure would be Divinely perfect. God wants it to be humanly perfect, and this can be effected only by a touch. Elijah in the desert may be fed by ravens or he may

[1] C. E. Osborne, *The Life of Father Dolling*, 269.

be fed by man's philanthropy. The physical effect will be the same, but not the moral effect. Elijah fed by the ravens is not a whit nearer to his kind than Elijah faint and hungry; but Elijah fed by human hands becomes himself more human. The greatest calamity of a leper was not his leprosy; it was his divorce from his fellow-men. It was not his physical disease that divorced him; it was the belief in his moral contagion. His greatest cry was for some one to touch him—to bridge the river of separation. It was easy to get the touch after he was healed. But the hard thing was to get contact before healing—to receive the touch before receiving the mandate, "Be thou clean!" His fellow-men would not grant him that boon. Doubtless they prayed for his recovery, but they would not touch him un-recovered. God could have healed him in answer to their prayers, but He wanted to heal him in answer to their contact.

¶ Social reformers are discovering that they can do little good for people of any sort while they hold them at arm's length. "I have learned," says a worker in one of the University settlements, "that you can get access to the people who need you only by living with them. They will not come to you; but Jew and Gentile will make you welcome if you come to them. Our meetings for their benefit are a failure. Our personal intercourse with them, man to man, has been promising great good. It is of no use to come once or twice to see them; you must live with them if you are to do anything for them."[1]

¶ The hand, more than any other limb or organ, differentiates man, begotten in the image of his Father, from the whole series of animal creations. No other animal has a hand. The corresponding organ in the anthropoid ape, which is the most like a hand, is not really a hand; it can fashion nothing, it is fit for nothing but to cling to a branch or convey food to the mouth. Only man has a hand, and as with it he stamps his impress upon nature, and founds his sovereignty of civilization, and performs his deeds of heroism, so, when he would caress, or soothe, or comfort, or encourage, or bless, or stimulate, or welcome his fellow human being, in obedience to some secret instinct, he invariably automatically lays his hand upon him.[2]

¶ Jesus could have cured the leper with a word. There was no need He should touch him. No *need*, did I say? There was

[1] R. E. Thompson, *Nature, the Mirror of Grace*, 81.
[2] B. Wilberforce, *The Power that Worketh in Us*, 56.

every need. For no one else would touch him. The healthy human hand, always more or less healing, was never laid on him; he was despised and rejected. It was a poor thing for the Lord to cure his body; He must comfort and cure his sore heart. Of all men a leper, I say, needed to be touched with the hand of love. Spenser says, "Entire affection hateth nicer hands." It was not for our master, our brother, our ideal man, to draw around Him the skirts of His garments and speak a lofty word of healing, that the man might at least be clean before He touched him. The man was His brother, and an evil disease cleaved fast unto him. Out went the loving hand to the ugly skin, and there was His brother as he should be—with the flesh of a child. I thank God that the touch went before the word. Nor do I think it was the touch of a finger, or of the finger-tips. It was a kindly healing touch in its nature as in its power. Oh, blessed leper! thou knowest henceforth what kind of a God there is in the earth—not the God of the priests, but a God such as Himself only can reveal to the hearts of His own.[1]

III.

The Greater Gift.

The physical cure is the pledge and promise of a still greater blessing. For leprosy was singled out by God Himself from the vast catalogue of human diseases and sufferings to keep before the eyes of His people of old a perpetual memorial of the vileness and awfulness of moral evil. The outer body was made by Him a mirror of the far deeper and darker taint in the soul. It was a silent preacher in the midst of the theocratic nation and to the end of time, testifying to the virulence of a more inveterate malady—that "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in us, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." Although it by no means invariably followed that the lepers of Israel were afflicted with their dire plague in consequence of personal sin, yet we know that this was the case in some instances, such as those of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah. And at all events the disease was regarded by the Jews as a mark of the Divine displeasure. They spoke of it as "the finger of

[1] G. MacDonald, *The Miracles of Our Lord*, 88.

God." It was considered an outward and visible sign of inward disorganization, guilt, and impurity.

¶ It is clear that the same principle [of the law of Moses] which made all having to do with death, as mourning, a corpse, the occasions of a ceremonial uncleanness, inasmuch as all these were signs and consequences of sin, might consistently with this have made every sickness an occasion of uncleanness, each of these being also death beginning, partial death—echoes in the body of that terrible reality, sin in the soul. But instead of this, in a gracious sparing of man, and not pushing the principle to the uttermost, God took but one sickness, one of these visible outcomings of a tainted nature, in which to testify that evil was not from Him, could not dwell with Him. He linked this teaching with but one; by His laws concerning it to train men into a sense of a clinging impurity, which needed a Pure and a Purifier to overcome and expel, and which nothing short of His taking of our flesh could drive out. And leprosy, the sickness of sicknesses, was throughout these Levitical ordinances selected of God from the whole host of maladies and diseases which had broken in upon the bodies of men. Bearing His testimony against it, He bore His testimony against that out of which every sickness grows, against sin; as not from Him, as grievous in His sight; and against the sickness also itself as grievous, being as it was a visible manifestation, a direct consequence of sin, a forerunner of that death which by the portal of disobedience and revolt had found entrance into natures created by Him for immortality.[1]

1. Salvation provides free access to God. When the Lord said, "I will; be thou made clean," when He had put forth His healing hand, from that moment the man had a right of approach to the place where God's honour dwelt—he might again tread the courts of the Temple; he might again offer his gifts; he might once more worship with the worshippers. And this is the great fruit of the sacrifice of Christ—of the "I will; be thou made clean," pronounced concerning each and all of us—that it procures us admission into the holiest, into the presence of God, and so brings us under the mighty healing influences which are ever going forth from Him, that having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, purged from dead works, we are able to draw near in faith, and henceforth to serve the living God.

[1] R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord*, 226.

¶ The Son of God, at once above our life and in our life, morally Divine and circumstantially human, mediates for us between the self so hard to escape, and the Infinite so hopeless to reach; and draws us out of our mournful darkness without losing us in excess of light. He opens to us the moral and spiritual mysteries of our existence, appealing to a consciousness in us that was asleep before. And though He leaves whole worlds of thought approachable only by silent wonder, yet His own walk of heavenly communion, His words of grace and works of power, His strife of Divine sorrow, His cross of self-sacrifice, His reappearance behind the veil of life eternal, fix on Him such holy trust and love, that, where we are denied the assurance of knowledge, we attain the repose of faith.[1]

2. Salvation links men together in a holy fellowship. As the Lord sent this suppliant, before an outcast, back to the society of his fellows, a cleansed man, no longer obliged to cover his lips in shame, no longer with a miserable sense of something that separated him from all his race, even so He gives unto His redeemed and sanctified a ground of true communion and fellowship one with another—He takes away the middle wall of partition that was between each man and his brethren, having slain the enmity and the selfishness by His cross.

¶ I have endeavoured in my tracts to prove that if Christ be really the head of every man, and if He really have taken human flesh, there is ground for a universal fellowship among men (a fellowship that is itself the foundation of those particular fellowships of the nation and the family, which I also consider sacred). I have maintained that it is the business of a Church to assert this ground of universal fellowship; that it ought to make men understand and feel how possible it is for men as men to fraternize in Christ; how impossible it is to fraternize, except in Him.[2]

3. It will be said that in any case the days of isolation are gone, and gone for ever. Nation can no longer hold itself aloof from nation, and people from people, as if they did not share a common humanity, hardly as if they lived in the same world. We are daily being forced into closer contacts, welded into closer unities. Well, what is to be the consequence of all this? Without the touch, the healing, cleansing, life-giving touch of Christ

[1] *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, i. 286.
[2] *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, i. 258.

and His gospel, without the higher life of a genuinely Christian civilization, it may mean a disaster fearful to contemplate, whose proportions we can scarcely imagine. On the one side it can mean only destruction to the races of heathendom. It is a well-known law of ethnology that, unless there be some assimilating, unifying power such as the gospel alone can furnish, the weaker always perishes rapidly before the stronger. The contacts of trade, commercialism, and militarism bring invariably in their train contagion and infection. The heathen are apt pupils of evil. With a fatal facility they learn the new vices of the soldiers, sailors, and traders of so-called civilized and Christian peoples, and add them to their own native vices and diseases. And the combination means nothing less than destruction.

There are consequences that run in the other direction also. With these ever closer relations of commerce and conquest which are fast knitting all the world into one come new and fearful dangers to ourselves. Up from the uncleansed life of heathendom shall sweep mighty plagues, both physical and moral. That life has diseases to give us whose horror we never dreamed of. It has sins to teach us which even in the depths of our depravity we have not imagined. And soldiers and sailors, traders and merchants, wanderers in far lands, away from the restraints of home, acquaintance, and familiar associations, are apt pupils in such things. That is what contact without Christ is bound to mean. If, through that inevitable touch of people upon people, virtue does not go out from us to them, then contagion and infection are sure to pass from them to us and us to them. If we will not share with them our highest life, our nobler ambitions, our blessings, above all, our gospel, then they will share with us their plagues of soul and body. Therefore alongside the warehouse, the barracks, and the saloon, which always mark the first wave of an advancing Western civilization, must be built the Christian school, the hospital, and the church.

¶ During Sunday afternoons in June 1888, Professor Drummond delivered a series of religious addresses at Grosvenor House, London. After distinguishing between religion and theology, he said that the truth of Christianity is manifest in the fact that there is no real civilization without it, and that the purer the form of Christianity the greater the development of civilization. "Show me," he said, with Matthew

Arnold, "ten square miles outside of Christianity where the life of man or the virtue of woman is safe, and I'll throw over Christianity at once."[1]

¶ Chalmers' address at the Exeter Hall meeting of the London Missionary Society in 1886 was the climax of his public work during this visit home. Exeter Hall was crowded, and the main interest of the meeting centred in Tamate's unpolished but thrilling eloquence. To recall a few of the most striking passages: "I have had twenty-one years' experience amongst natives. I have seen the semi-civilized and the uncivilized; I have lived with the Christian native, and I have lived, dined, and slept with the cannibal. I have visited the islands of the New Hebrides; I have visited the Loyalty Group, I have seen the work of missions in the Samoan Group, I know all the islands of the Society Group, I have lived for ten years in the Hervey Group, I know a few of the groups close on the line, and for at least nine years of my life I have lived with the savages of New Guinea; but I have never yet met with a single man or woman, or a single people, that your civilization without Christianity has civilized. For God's sake let it be done at once! Gospel and commerce, but remember this, it must be the Gospel first. Wherever there has been the slightest spark of civilization in the Southern Seas it has been because the Gospel has been preached there, and wherever you find in the Island of New Guinea a friendly people or a people that will welcome you, there the missionaries of the Cross have been preaching Christ. Civilization! The Rampart can only be stormed by those who carry the Cross."[2]

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 279.
[2] R. Lovett, *James Chalmers*, 276.

The Physician.

LITERATURE.

Black (J.), *The Pilgrim Ship*, 199.
Bruce (A. B.), *The Galilean Gospel*, 73.
Campbell (W. M.), *Foot-Prints of Christ*, 92.
Cox (S.), *A Day with Christ*, 91.
Griffith-Jones (E.), *Faith and Verification*, 134.
Hall (R.), *Works*, iv. 421.
Kingsley (C.), *The Water of Life*, 213.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew ix.–xvii., 18.
Ross (J. M. E.), *The Self-Portraiture of Jesus*, 1.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, xi. (1865), No. 618.
Zahn (T.), *Bread and Salt from the Word of God*, 227.
Christian World Pulpit, xxv. 385 (F. W. Farrar).
Church of England Magazine, lii. 112 (C. Clayton).

THE PHYSICIAN.

They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. —Matt. ix. 12.

1. ONE of the best known scenes in the gospel story is here placed before our eyes, and the same picture, in all essentials, meets us more than once in the Gospels. On the one side stands Jesus, who sat at meat with publicans and sinners as their friend; and on the other side the Pharisees, who murmured and found fault with our Lord for so doing. On another day Jesus replied to the murmuring of the Pharisees by the three parables of the Lost Piece of Silver, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son. The same opposition was manifested when He sat at meat as the guest of Simon the Pharisee, and, to the astonishment of those who were eating with Him, allowed a woman that was a sinner to wash His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with her hair. To all sorts of people Jesus cried, "Follow Me." There were the honest fishermen by the Lake of Gennesaret; there was the faithful son who wanted first to go and bury his father; and to-day it is a publican who is sitting at the receipt of custom at Capernaum. He is named Matthew, and he is the Apostle whose name stands at the head of the Gospel from which the text is taken. The publican must not be missing from the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, from those whom He invited to give up their former calling and become His fellow-workers. He was not only tolerated but even drawn by Jesus to Himself, and brought forward by Him that all might know why Jesus came into the world.

If we ask in amazement how it was that a publican could immediately respond to such a call, and give up the whole course of his life, a satisfactory answer will occur to each of us. The publican Matthew, like many more of his order, must have heard Jesus preaching more than once, and possibly he may even have listened secretly to the preaching of John the Baptist. This

powerful preaching had opened a new world to him, the very opposite of the world in which he had hitherto lived; a world of righteousness, of grace, and of peace. Hence sprang his implicit trust in the Man who offered Himself to him as a guide to a new life and a new life-work. He celebrated with a feast the hour in which Jesus made him a sharer in His own work. On the same day he invited many of his own class to a meal in his house. And as they felt drawn to Jesus, so Jesus also seems to have felt at ease in their company. But what a company that was! Even those who know but little of the conditions of the Holy Land at that time, of the fearful pressure of taxation under which the Jewish people had long groaned, of the habitual embezzlements and extortions of those who farmed out the taxes and of the officials under them, can understand that publicans and sinners were almost interchangeable words. Jesus Himself did not speak of them in any other way. The publicans were branded as sinners; for they were solemnly excommunicated from the synagogue as traitors and renegades, and most of them were, according to Jewish law, beaten with forty stripes save one, before they were cast out, by order of the rulers of the synagogue. Thus branded as traitors and sinners, they were shut out from all decent society, and were compelled to herd together, corrupt and corrupting. Despised, they became despicable, extortionate, base. We cannot wonder that the Pharisees sneered and shook their heads when they asked the disciples of Jesus, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"

¶ There was nothing in Roman tax-gathering which made vice in that calling a necessary thing. In point of fact, the vice came from the outside. The *master*-publicans were men of rank and credit; but they put their work into the hands of subordinates who were often taken from the slums. The vices these exhibited in their profession were brought with them *into* their profession; they came from the previous corruptions of human nature, and no trade is chargeable with them. We cannot morally label Matthew by calling him "Matthew the Publican." The truth is, the obloquy with which Matthew was regarded by his countrymen did not proceed from the fear that he was a bad man, but from the certainty that he was a bad Jew. The most galling fact to the Israel of later days was the fact that she paid tribute to another land. Ideally she claimed to be the mistress of the world

—the nation into whose treasury all tribute should flow. That such a nation should pay taxes to a foreign people, a Gentile people, was an awful thought. It was a pain worse than laceration, more cruel than a blow. But there was the possibility of a pain more poignant still. It was bad enough that the tribute of homage from Israel should be collected by a *Roman*. But what if the man who gathered it should be a son of Israel herself! What if the man who taunted her with her misfortunes should be one born within her pale, bred within her precincts, sheltered within her privileges—one from whom was due the veneration for her sanctuary and the reverence for her God! Now, this often happened; and it happened in the case of Matthew. Here was a Jew who had lost the last shred of patriotism. He had forgotten the traditions of his ancestors! He had not only accepted without a blush the domination by the stranger; he had taken part with the stranger in his domination! He had attached himself to the enemies of his country—had become a collector of their tribute from his own conquered land! The man who acted thus was bound to be execrated by his race. He was execrated on that ground alone. No amount of personal vices would in the eyes of his countrymen have added to the enormity of his sin, and no amount of personal virtues would in the slightest degree have minimized that sin. His deed was itself to them the acme of all iniquity, from which nothing could detract and which nothing could intensify. The blackness of Matthew's character in the eyes of the Jew was the fact of his apostasy.[1]

2. It seems as though the disciples of those times were embarrassed by the question. Jesus Himself was obliged to give the answer in their stead. He replied with the proverb: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." He sheltered His work as a healer of men's souls behind the example of those who healed men's bodies. "Physicians go where they are needed" (so ran His argument). "They do not haunt the houses of the healthy. They go where the disease is, and you honour them for their devotion to duty. Even so I also go where I am needed. And if there be any cases specially serious, specially hopeless, specially friendless, there, above all, must I go. There My work calls Me, and there My heart leads Me." It was a great argument, simple as the common speech of men, yet deep as the Everlasting Love.

[1] G. Matheson, *The Representative Men of the New Testament*, 188.

¶ In 1842, when Dr. Hutchison Stirling was a young man and uncertain whether to follow medicine or literature as a profession, he wrote to Carlyle, who, in course of his reply, said: "Practically, my advice were very decidedly that you *kept* by medicine; that you resolved faithfully to learn it, on all sides of it, and make yourself in actual fact an Ἰατρὸς, a man that *could heal disease.* I am very serious in this. A steady course of professional industry has ever been held the usefullest support for *mind* as well as body: I heartily agree with that. And often I have said, What profession is there equal in true nobleness to medicine? He that can abolish pain, relieve his fellow-mortal from sickness, he is the indisputably usefullest of all men. Him savage and civilized will honour. He is in the right, be in the wrong who may. As a Lord Chancellor, under one's horse-hair wig, there might be misgivings; still more perhaps as a Lord Primate, under one's cauliflower; but if I could heal disease, I should say to all men and angels without fear, 'En ecce!'"[1]

3. The proverb Christ employed was in common use both by the Hebrew Rabbis and by the heathen historians and poets. We find it in the Talmud, and in Greek and Roman authors. It was one of that kind of sayings—the gnomic—which the Rabbis spent their lives in making, learning, repeating. And on our Lord's lips, as they would instantly feel, it took a tone of rebuke. *They* professed to be healers in Israel. They professed to have a vast store of medicinal words with which they could minister to the mind diseased, and give saving health to the distempered soul. But what kind of healers were those who administered their remedies only to the hale and robust, who shrank from the sick lest they should expose themselves to infection? Yet this was precisely what these professed "healers" were doing. They had wisdom for the wise, but none for the foolish. They would explain the secrets of righteousness to the devout, but not to the sinful. They taught the spiritually healthy how health might be preserved, but left the sick multitude, the people altogether born in sin, to languish and perish in their iniquities.

That was not Christ's conception of the Healer's art and duty. The true Healer was he who dreaded no infection, who went fearlessly among the diseased, and sought to make them whole; who gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, feet to the lame,

[1] *James Hutchison Stirling: His Life and Work*, 57.

vigour to the decrepit, life to the dying. The Healer's duty lay, not with the few strong and hale, but with the great multitude lying sick unto death, no man caring for their souls.

In this proverb, therefore, Jesus virtually announced Himself as the true Healer, the Good Physician, as caring for the weak more than for the strong, for the sick more than for the whole. And, if in that announcement there was rebuke for the Rabbis and doctors of the law as untrue to their vocation, unfaithful to their professed art of healing, there was plainly comfort and hope for the weak and sick who reclined at Matthew's table.

¶ Natural Religion is based upon the sense of sin; it recognizes the disease, but it cannot find, it does not look out for the remedy. That remedy, both for guilt and for moral impotence, is found in the central doctrine of Revelation, the Mediation of Christ. Thus it is that Christianity has been able from the first to occupy the world and gain a hold on every class of human society to which its preachers reached; this is why the Roman power and the multitude of religions which it embraced could not stand against it; this is the secret of its sustained energy, and its never-flagging martyrdoms; this is how at present it is so mysteriously potent, in spite of the new and fearful adversaries which beset its path. It has with it that gift of staunching and healing the one deep wound of human nature, which avails more for its success than a full encyclopedia of scientific knowledge and a whole library of controversy, and therefore it must last while human nature lasts.[1]

I.

Christ the Healer of the Body.

"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." This saying serves two purposes—an immediate apologetic purpose, and a permanent didactic one. Viewing it first in the former aspect, we remark that the point of the saying lies not in what is stated, but in what is implied—in the suggestion that Christ *was* a Physician. That understood, all becomes plain. For no one is surprised that a physician visits the sick rather than the healthy, and visits most frequently those that are most grievously afflicted with disease. Nor does any one dream

[1] J. H. Newman, *The Grammar of Assent*, 480.

of making it an occasion of reproach to a physician that he shrinks not from visiting those whose maladies are of a loathsome or dangerous nature, offensive to his senses, involving peril to his life. That he so acts is regarded simply as the display of a praiseworthy enthusiasm in his profession, the want of which would be reckoned a true ground of reproach. Regard Christ as a physician, and He at once gets the benefit of these universally prevalent sentiments as to what is becoming in one who practises the healing art.

1. Jesus Christ is the Good Physician as well as the Good Shepherd. His public ministry proves that He recognized two deadly enemies of mankind. The arch-enemy is sin—the dread evil that afflicts man's soul, against which He directed the whole forces of the spiritual world. But there was another enemy against whom also He waged a hearty and persistent warfare—disease, which afflicts man's body. He thus proved His love for man's nature as a whole, and laid down the redemption of the race on that double basis, without recognizing which the world can never be fully saved. For man's life is a unity with two essential sides; he is a compound of matter and spirit, clay and divinity, perishable body and immortal soul. Salvation means restored *health*; and the old proverb, *Mens sana in corpore sano*, is thus the condition of that perfect well-being which it is the will of God that we should all normally enjoy. In our actual experience we seldom attain to this happy condition; but that we were meant for it, and that we should strive hard for it, is shown beautifully and convincingly in the attitude which Jesus took towards sin and disease throughout His public ministry. He treated them as enemies, and He recognized their close connexion; He did what He could in forgiving men's sins to heal their sicknesses; and in healing their sicknesses He never failed to emphasize the darker evil of which disease is fundamentally one of the most persistent symbols. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

¶ Memory and imagination linger lovingly over the external ministry of healing which filled the land with the name of Jesus. He was not the only healer: in these words there is an evident

reference to physicians in general, men who embodied such skill and knowledge as were then possible. Luke is called "the beloved physician," and no doubt there were many beloved for their own sakes and honoured for their work's sake. But of exact science there was, of course, little or none, and every chance for quackery, for empiricism, for superstition. That is a terribly suggestive phrase in the story of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment: she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." So is the proverb quoted by our Lord: "Physician, heal thyself." So also is another ancient Jewish proverb: "Even the best of doctors deserves Gehenna." And all who have seen anything of native medicine among primitive tribes know how often the cure is truly worse than the disease. It was into all that chaos and crudity that the Son of Man came with Divine power flowing from Him. Surely there never was a more beautiful story more exquisitely told! The main incidents are written on all our hearts. Yet perhaps we do not estimate largely enough the amount of His work in this direction, nor the physical and nervous strain it caused Himself as virtue went forth from Him in His manifold acts of healing. "Whithersoever he entered, into villages, or city, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."[1]

¶ Christ's healing of the sick can in no way be termed against nature, seeing that the sickness which was healed was against the nature of man, that it is sickness which is abnormal, and not health. The healing is the restoration of the primitive order. We should see in the miracle not the infraction of a law, but the neutralizing of a lower law, the suspension of it for a time by a higher. Of this abundant analogous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we do not say, when the lower thus gives place in favour of the higher, that there was any violation of law, or that anything contrary to nature came to pass; rather we acknowledge the law of a greater freedom swallowing up the law of a lesser.[2]

2. Now, this ministry of physical healing was in itself a revelation. De Quincey says that Jesus adopted this line of

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Self-Portraiture of Jesus*, 3.
[2] Archbishop Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, 16.

action "chiefly as the best means of advertising His approach far and wide, and thus convoking the people to His instructions." But there was more in it than that, a whole world more, then and now! It is the Divine justification of all attempts to alleviate the external and physical conditions of human life. It is the Divine justification of medical missions, which have the unique glory of being not only Christ's own work, but His own work done in His own way. It is a rebuke to the unreal and affected way in which we sometimes speak of physical pain as though it were nothing at all. Had pain and sickness not been great realities, Christ would not have spent so much time and strength in fighting against them. He stands for ever now in the sight of men as the goal towards which humanity is travelling. And His ministry of physical healing is a proof that pain and sickness are temporary and abnormal things: in God's good time there shall be no more pain because "the former things are passed away."

¶ Within the lifetime of some of us a strange and wonderful thing happened on the earth—something of which no prophet foretold, of which no seer dreamt, nor is it among the beatitudes of Christ Himself; only St. John seems to have had an inkling of it in that splendid chapter in which he describes the new heaven and the new earth, when the former things should pass away, when all tears should be wiped away, and there should be no more crying nor sorrow. On October 16, 1846, in the amphitheatre of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, a new Prometheus gave a gift [sulphuric ether as an anæsthetic] as rich as that of fire, the greatest single gift ever made to suffering humanity. The prophecy was fulfilled—*neither shall there be any more pain*; a mystery of the ages had been solved by a daring experiment by man on man in the introduction of anæsthesia. As Weir Mitchell sings in his poem, *The Death of Pain*—

> Whatever triumphs still shall hold the mind,
> Whatever gifts shall yet enrich mankind,
> Ah! here, no hour shall strike through all the years,
> No hour so sweet as when hope, doubt and fears,
> 'Mid deepening silence watched one eager brain
> With Godlike will decree the Death of Pain.

At a stroke the curse of Eve was removed, that multiplied sorrow of sorrows, representing in all ages the very apotheosis of pain. The knife has been robbed of its terrors, and the hospitals are no longer the scenes of those appalling tragedies that made the

stoutest quail. To-day we take for granted the silence of the operating-room, but to reach this Elysium we had to travel the slow road of laborious research, which gave us first the chemical agents, and then brave hearts had to risk reputation, and even life itself, in experiments, the issue of which was for long doubtful. More widespread in its benediction, as embracing all races and all classes of society, is the relief of suffering, and the prevention of disease through the growth of modern sanitary science in which has been fought out the greatest victory in history. . . . It is not simply that the prospect of recovery is enormously enhanced, but Listerian surgery has diminished suffering to an extraordinary degree. . . . Man's redemption of man is nowhere so well known as in the abolition and prevention of the group of diseases which we speak of as the fevers, or the acute infections. This is the glory of the science of medicine, and nowhere in the world have its lessons been so thoroughly carried out as in this country. . . . If, in the memorable phrase of the Greek philosopher Prodicus, "That which benefits human life is God," we may see in this new gospel a link betwixt us and the crowning race of those who eye to eye shall look on knowledge, and in whose hand nature shall be an open book.[1]

II.

Christ the Healer of the Soul.

But, after all, our Lord's supreme purpose was to be a healer of souls. Had the critics of Jesus but accredited Him with the character of a Healer of spiritual maladies, they would not have been scandalized by His habit of associating with the morally and socially degraded. But that Jesus was a physician was just the thing that never occurred to their minds. And why? Because their own thoughts and ways went in a wholly different direction, and they judged Him by themselves. The Rabbis and their disciples were students of the law, and their feeling towards such as knew not the law was one of simple aversion and contempt. They expected Jesus to share this feeling. Men are ever apt to make themselves the standard of moral judgment. The Rabbi expects all who assume the function of a teacher to share his contempt for the multitude ignorant of legal technicalities and niceties; the "philosophe," confining his sympathies to the culti-

[1] Sir W. Osler, *Man's Redemption of Man*, 31.

vated few, regards with mild disdain the interest taken by philanthropists in popular movements; the "mystagogue" who invites select persons to initiation into religious mysteries adopts for himself, and expects all others belonging to the spiritual aristocracy of mankind to adopt along with him, the sentiment of the Roman poet: "I hate and abhor the profane rabble." The mass of mankind have eternal reason for thankfulness that Jesus Christ came not as a Rabbi, or as a "philosophe," or as a "hierophant," with the proud, narrow contempt characteristic of men bearing these titles, but as a healer of souls, with the broad, warm sympathies and the enthusiasm of humanity congenial to such a vocation. The fact exposed Him to the censure of contemporaries, but by way of compensation it has earned for Him the gratitude of all after ages.

¶ Thou speakest of thy sin and miseries, which do indeed make a barrier between God and us: but, if I know Jesus ever so little, I think, when I read or hear such complaints, of practised physicians, when they are confronted with a common disease: they are not unprovided, they have medicines for it that never fail. So say I now: Jesus knows plenty of means of healing, show Him all thy wounds with a weeping heart, ask in humility and confidence for His mighty healing, and that He may heal thee thoroughly; but this may not happen unless He, for a while, increases thy wounds by a deep sense of thy sin, misery, and darkness, which indeed is means in love that thou hereafter, yea, for ever, mayest feel no further need.[1]

1. That Christ came into the world as a healer of souls is a fact full of didactic meaning. It means, first, that Christianity is before all things a religion of redemption. Its proper vocation is to find the lost, to lift the low, to teach the ignorant, to set free those in bonds, to wash the unclean, to heal the sick; and it must go where it can discover the proper subjects of its art, remembering that the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

(1) There is in the natural heart of man an indifferent selfishness and a careless cruelty which make men always let the weak go to the wall, and very often trample savagely on the fallen. They are akin in this to the creatures of the field; to the hounds that bite their wounded brother in the kennel; to the sea-gulls

[1] Gerhardt Tersteegen.

that swoop down on the wounded bird as the wave is already beginning to be crimsoned with its blood. Among savage tribes the sick and the injured were killed or left to die. In polished Greece and Imperial Rome children were exposed and slaves were mercilessly tortured. Christ taught the world that this apathy of heart is earthly, sensual, devilish. He taught us once and for ever the sacredness, not of fine gifts and fair and brilliant intellects, but of man as man. It was not for the sake of the rich, the strong, the mighty, the noble, that He took our nature upon Him, but for poor men, for slaves, for carpenters, for tax-gatherers, for fishermen, for daily labourers, for peasant women, nay, even more, for the sake of the sinful, the outcast, the fallen, for all at whom men, who are in most respects the causes of their ruin, point the finger of cruel scorn. He saw the soul of beauty in things ugly, and the potentiality of goodness in things evil.

¶ There is an Eastern legend about Christ so profound of meaning, so full of instruction, that we are half tempted to think that it must be true in fact as it is in feeling. On the high road, under the blistering sunlight, lay a poor, miserable dog that had died of starvation. Clouds of flies had begun to settle on the carcase, and the lazy, aimless wayfarers gathered round to look at it, scaring away for a moment the obscene vultures that hovered near; and all of them, one after another, expressed their idle disgust and their pitiless loathing of it. But at last they fell silent, for the Master approached, and for a moment He stood and cast His eye on that horrible object, on that dead creature which God had made, and there was silence, and at last He said, "Its teeth are as white as pearls," and so He passed on. He who cared for the lilies and for the lions cared also for the little sparrows, and had His word of pity even for that dead dog. I think that he who could have invented such a legend must have seen very deeply into the heart of Christ.[1]

¶ The late General Gordon, in one of his published letters, describes the remorse he long felt for a trivial act of cruelty into which he inadvertently fell. A lizard was climbing up the side of his house in the sunshine and he thoughtlessly flicked it with his cane and so cut short its life. He had often shed blood upon the battlefield without the slightest hesitation, and felt never a qualm of conscience afterwards. But this act troubled him more than the carnage in which he had taken his part as a soldier.

[1] Dean Farrar.

He was haunted by the feeling that he had destroyed a life that was more meagre in capacity than his own, and much shorter in its span. In the regret to which he confessed there was a genuine ethical discernment, for every virtuous nature feels itself under special obligation to the weak. God thinks mercifully of us because, in comparison with His own rich, manifold, exhaustless and immortal blessedness, our lives are chequered, circumscribed, crippled, and poverty-stricken. We are mortal, blooms trembling to their fall, fading dreams, fabrics of exposed nerve, phantasms of alternating smiles and tears. We do not expiate our sins by that which we suffer, and God has no indulgent laxity for wilful, unwept, reiterated transgression; but our frailties woo the marvellous compassions of His Fatherhood. Perhaps if He had not made us out of the dust we could not have stood so near the sacred centre of His pitying love.[1]

(2) The whole need not a physician. Are there any men, then, who are whole? Jesus did not directly deny it. The publicans and sinners were sick people—sick in soul, sick in honour, sick in conscience. The Pharisees were whole in comparison with them. They had remained true to their nationality, they lived correctly according to the law of their fathers, they were held in honour by their nation as the guardians and teachers of the law. If they were of different minds amongst themselves on religious and moral questions, still they had and knew the law, and were well versed in expounding it. They had had great teachers, whose decisions were accounted by them as a gospel. They would also gladly have recognized a new Master, who in their own way, only more clearly and more intelligently than their former masters, would comment on the Word of God and teach the true wisdom of life. But they had no need of a Teacher who said, "I am a Physician," because they did not feel ill.

¶ In the great company of those who have been baptized in the name of Christ, we find many people like the Pharisees, who are unable to accept Jesus and to desire a closer relationship to Him, just because Jesus is a Physician and they feel well. The Gospel is a medicine: to one it tastes bitter, to another nauseously sweet. Who cares to take medicine when he feels perfectly well? A draught of fresh water from a natural or an artificial well, or a glass of wine at a joyful feast, tastes better and does more good to a man who is whole.

[1] T. G. Selby, *The God of the Frail*, 5.

How are we to reply to this? Are we to prove to such people that they are sick, and that our whole nation is sick, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? Are we to force ourselves upon them, and show that their imaginary health does not exist, and that they are sadly in need of the Physician? That would not be like unto the Master. Jesus did not say to the Pharisees, "Come unto Me," He said, "Go your way." Neither did He say, "Come and learn to know Me better," but, "Go and learn what is written in your Bible: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'" If ye were compassionate, ye would not look down so contemptuously on degraded and inferior people, and so askance at those who take an interest in them; ye would not find the distance so great between them and yourselves, but would acknowledge them as your equals in all the essentials which make up the misery and the dignity of man. Go and learn better what ye yourselves acknowledge as the chief command of your God, the law of love. Then prove yourselves, and thus learn to know yourselves. Perhaps the day will come when ye will find yourselves destitute of love, and therefore destitute of all true life, when ye will feel sick in the innermost centre of your being. Remember then that there is a Physician who heals all diseases. Jesus still speaks thus to those who are whole, and who turn their backs upon Him; and He can scarcely speak in any other way to many of those who confess Him.[1]

¶ A minister, when he had done preaching in a country village, said to a farm-labourer who had been listening to him, "Do you think Jesus Christ died to save *good* people, or *bad* people?" "Well, sir," said the man, "I should say He died to save good people." "But did He die to save bad people?" "No, sir; no, certainly not, sir." "Well, then, what will become of you and me?" "Well, sir, I do not know. I dare say you be pretty good, sir; and I try to be as good as I can." That is just the common doctrine; and after all, though we think it has died out among us, that is the religion of ninety-nine English people out of every hundred who know nothing of Divine grace: we are to be as good as we can; we are to go to church or to chapel, and do all that we can, and then Jesus Christ died for us, and we shall be saved. Whereas the gospel is that He did not do anything at all for people who can rely on themselves, but gave Himself for lost and ruined ones. He did not come into the world to save self-righteous people; on their own showing, they do not want to be saved. He comes because we need Him, and therefore He comes only to those who need Him; and if we do not need Him, and are

[1] T. Zahn, *Bread and Salt from the Word of God*, 235.

such good, respectable people, we must find our own way to heaven. Need, need alone, is that which quickens the physician's footsteps.[1]

2. That Christ's supreme purpose in coming was to heal men's souls means, further, that Christianity must be the universal religion. A religion which aims at the healing of spiritual disease, and which has confidence in its power to effect the cure, is entitled to supersede all other religions and to become the faith of all mankind; and it will be well for the world when it has become such in fact. The world everywhere needs this religion, for sin is universal.

It is not unlikely that the Pharisees had an instinctive perception that the new love for the sinful exhibited in the conduct of Jesus meant a religious revolution, the setting aside of Jewish exclusiveness, and the introduction of a new humanity, in which Jew and Gentile should be one. They might very easily arrive at this conclusion. They had but to reflect on the terms they employed to describe the objects of Christ's special care. Publicans were to them as heathens, and "sinners" was in their dialect a synonym for Gentiles. It might, therefore, readily occur to them that the man who took such a warm interest in the publicans and sinners of Judæa could have no objection, on principle, to fellowship with Gentiles, and that when His religion had time to develop its peculiar tendencies, it was likely to become the religion, not of the Jews alone, but of mankind.

Whether the men who found fault with the sinner's Friend had so much penetration or not, it is certain at least that Jesus Himself was fully aware whither His line of action tended. He revealed the secret in the words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." In describing His mission in these terms, He intimated in effect that in its ultimate scope that mission looked far beyond the bounds of Palestine, and was likely to have even more intimate relations with the outside world than with the chosen race. He knew too well how righteous his countrymen accounted themselves to cherish the hope of making a wide and deep impression upon them. He deemed it indeed a duty to try, and He did try faithfully and persistently, but always as one who

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

knew that the result would be that described in the sad words of the fourth evangelist, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." And as He had an infinite longing to save, and was not content to waste His life, He turned His attention to more likely subjects; to such as were not puffed up with the conceit of righteousness, and would not take it as an offence to be called sinners. Such He found among the degraded classes of Jewish society; but there was no reason why they should be sought there alone. The world was full of sinners; why, then, limit the mission to the sinful in Judæa? Shall we say because the Jews were lesser sinners than the Gentiles? But that would be to make the mission after all a mission to the righteous. If it is to be a mission to the sinful, let it be that out and out. Let Him who is intrusted with it say, "The greater the sinner the greater his need of Me." That was just what Christ did say in effect when He uttered with significant emphasis the words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." It is, therefore, a word on which all men everywhere can build their hopes, a word by which the Good Physician says to every son of Adam, "Look unto me, and be saved."

¶ Christ's way with sinners was to love them, to believe in their recoverability. He tackled the outcasts as an object-lesson in the possibilities of a loved humanity. To preach His Gospel to men is to announce your faith in a Divine something in them which will respond to the Divine something you bring to them. It is this spirit which makes Christianity the most daring of optimisms; which puts it into magnificent contrast with the fatalism of the East and the fatalism of the West. While Schopenhauer declares you can no more change the character of a bad man than the character of a tiger; while Nietzsche sneers at the weak and exalts force and repression, the Gospel goes on hoping and goes on saving.[1]

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-Day*, 37.

The Ministry of Small Things.

LITERATURE.

Austin (G. B.), *The Beauty of Goodness*, 81.
Binney (T.), *Money*, 220.
Broughton (L. G.), *Christianity and the Commonplace*, 41.
Burrell (D. J.), *The Unaccountable Man*, 214.
Carter (T. T.), *Meditations on the Public Life of Our Lord*, i. 256.
Jeffrey (G.), *The Believer's Privilege*, 73.
Jones (J. M.), *The Cup of Cold Water*, 3.
Maclaren (A.), *A Year's Ministry*, ii. 331.
„ „ *Expositions*: St. Matthew ix.–xvii., 110.
Parker (J.), *The Cavendish Pulpit*, i., No. 10.
Smellie (A.), *In the Hour of Silence*, 201.
Wiseman (N.), *Children's Sermons*, 136.
Christian World Pulpit, lxxx. 122 (J. C. Owen).
Examiner, April 27, 1905 (J. H. Jowett).
Homiletic Review, New Ser., xx. 526 (G. M. Meacham).

The Ministry of Small Things.

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matt. x. 42.

In ordinary circumstances there is scarcely any act that can have less about it of self-denial and self-sacrifice than the gift to any one of a cup of cold water. The water is so abundant, and the gift of it involves so little cost or care, that it is bestowed without thought of obligation, rendered and received without thought of any gratitude being due. Here, however, our Lord brings into play a principle which dignifies and ennobles the simplest acts, and gives signal value to the smallest gifts. It is not the value of the gift in itself, but the end the giver had in view, and the spirit in which he gave it; it is not the gift, but the motive that the Lord causes to stand out in broadest relief before our eye. The gift may be great in itself, and yet, in so far as the spirit and motive of the giver are concerned, may be valueless. And, on the other hand, the gift or deed may be insignificant in itself, yet when coupled with the spirit and motive may be worthy of special cognizance and honour. More than all this—for here, withdrawing our minds from all vain and selfish motives, striking a death-blow at all self-seeking Pharisaism and hypocrisy, measuring men's acts by the high standard of genuine love to Himself, as represented in the person of a disciple—our Lord leads us particularly to note that all acts are noble—are worthy of honour and reward—only as the motives of the actor are unselfish and loving, and spring out of regard to Christ Himself and respect to His name and glory. Thus, if we were to place in one scale of the balance what men should reckon the noblest deed or the noblest gift with only the love of self in it, and in the other scale the most insignificant act or gift with the love of Christ, and bestowed upon a disciple for His sake, that insignificant act or

gift, thus freighted with love to Him, would immeasurably outweigh the other. Not only so, but if we take the Saviour's estimate, He reckons the one as valueless, while He tells that the other shall not lack its reward.

I.

Little Things.

1. Life's most perfect gifts, life's most perfect mercies, are little things. "A cup of cold water." We have sometimes become singularly blind. We set before ourselves as life's most perfect prizes, the summing up of life, the essence of its bliss, the things which the experience of every age has proved have no relation to genuine bliss at all. We strive and deny ourselves, become untrue to our divinest longings, strangle our noblest instincts in order to possess them, and they leave us hungry and haggard as ever. But it is common things, single things, that quench thirst; not spiced wine, but the "cup of cold water." Health, work, genuine friendship, the caresses of little children, the love that set its hand in yours one beautiful morning five-and-twenty years ago, which has become deeper, richer, sweeter, as your head has grown grey. God's sweet, simple gifts! A soul which is always young, which is as fresh in old age as when it came first from the hand of God. That is life's most precious wealth, life's most perfect gift—the "cup of cold water."

¶ I saw a rich man's Bible a little while ago, and on the inside cover there was gummed a little message of goodwill from a poor man, and the rich man found refreshment in it daily. It is a delightful study to go through the Epistles of St. Paul and to discover how many obscure people ministered to the great Apostle's refreshment. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." "I was refreshed by the coming of Fortunatus and Achaius." These were all subordinate people; their names are linked with no great exploits; but they gave cups of cold water to a mighty Apostle, and kept his spirit strong.[1]

2. Our real salvation, the things which refresh and put heart into us, are the simplicities of the gospel—the cup of cold water.

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, April 27, 1905.

Charles Kingsley was a scientist, but he was a poet also in every fibre of his soul; and it is only a scientist who is a poet that can expound his own science. Charles Kingsley showed how the great volcanoes have been God's most glorious workers. Every harvest in the fruitful plains of Europe is due to the beneficent work of the volcanoes ages ago; every grain of the rich soil was melted out of the solid granite. It is a romantic story, a perfect fairy tale, an enchantment, if you know how to read it, if you have the imagination to picture the whole process to yourself. But the embarrassed farmer with a hundred calls upon him, who finds it hard work to provide for his children, has little heart to think of those things; he only wonders what the next harvest is going to be. So the great mysteries of theology—they ought to be studied. Depend upon it that to give up thinking is to impoverish the gospel. But those matters are not our real salvation. There come times when those things are not bread, but stones—a highly flavoured and elaborately cooked feast, but we cannot eat it. You have laid out the table grandly. Like Ahasuerus at his banquet, you have set out "vessels of gold" and poured "royal wine" into them; but I am thirsty, and the fever is in my blood still; I crave for "a cup of cold water." "God is love"; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"; "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out"; "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; "Where I am, there shall ye be also"; "I go to prepare a place for you"—*that* is the "cup of cold water"; I drink deep of it; it quenches my thirst; I am young again; despair is gone; I am master of life; nothing can quail me. It is the "cup of cold water" that we need.

¶ I have heard that during the battle of Fredericksburg there was a little patch of ground which was occupied in turn by the contending forces. It was covered with the dead and the dying; and all through the afternoon of a weary day the cry was heard, "Water, water!" A Southern soldier begged of his captain to be allowed to answer those piteous cries, but met with the refusal, "No; it would be certain death." He persisted, however, saying, "Above the roar of artillery and the crack of the muskets I hear those cries for water: let me go!" He set out with a bucket of water and a tin cup; for awhile the bullets sang around him, but he seemed to bear a charmed life. Then, as the Federals beyond

the field perceived his purpose, the firing gradually ceased; and for an hour and a half there was an armistice, while the soldier in grey, in full sight of both armies, went about on his errand of mercy. Verily, that was the truce of God!

And this was the kindness of our Lord. He came from heaven to bring the cup of cold water to dying men. Ah, that was the greatest kindness that ever was known. It was the most sublime heroism too. But the firing did not cease when He came to us with the water from the well beside the gate at Bethlehem; His mercy toward us cost Him His life. What shall we render unto the Lord for His loving kindness?[1]

II.

Small Services.

1. There cannot seemingly be a more trivial service than a cup of cold water given to the passing traveller. So we think in this land, where springs of water and rivers abound, and where a cup of cold water can be so easily obtained. If, however, we go to the desert, as the weary traveller passes along it under the burning rays of an Eastern sun, how precious to him is the cup of cold water to allay his thirst! There have been seasons of famine when a loaf of bread was of more value than gold, and when he who brought it was the messenger of life to those who were starving with hunger and staring death in the face. It may seem a very trifling thing to pay a visit to the house of a poor disciple and leave there with him some small token of Christian kindness; yet the visit and the act may have been light and comfort to him in the hour of despondency and distress. The widow on our northern Highland coast who lost her only son in a storm because there was no light to guide his frail bark to the natural inlet of safety by the shore might seem to do a very slight thing when every evening thereafter at sundown she put her little lighted oil-lamp in the end window of her humble abode to burn till dawn of the morning; yet the trifling act, as some might reckon it, was the safety of many of the island fishermen in nights of storm. Could we bring before our eye all the results of the acts that in themselves seem but slight and insignificant, but which love to

[1] D. J. Burrell, *The Unaccountable Man*, 222.

Christ has evoked, it would be found that they have formed the starting-point of influences that have told materially upon the well-being of mankind.

¶ The other morning I saw an ingenious machine which told with the minutest exactitude the strength of a bar of metal put to the test. You had only to look at the indicator, and it told you within the hundredth fraction of a pound what weight that bar of metal could bear. So the smallest thing may indicate the force of Christian life, the store of Christian self-denial, the power of Christian service, there is in you.[1]

2. Few men have the opportunity of performing great things in the cause of the Lord. There are few that have great things, as these words are generally understood, to do in the way either of service or of sacrifice for Christ. All men cannot be missionaries, or devote the whole of their time to direct work in the vineyard of the Lord. All are not blessed with temporal abundance. Most Christian men are occupied in the business of the world, and have to engage in toil for their daily bread. Some, indeed, can command all their time, but most have little more than their Sabbaths and their savings to offer to the Master. They can give only a portion of their means and shreds of their time for labour in the vineyard of the Lord. They can give no more, for they have no more to give. But we can all do little things; and there are a hundred *little* things round about us which we can do, and which are crying to be done. In one of the very greatest of his poems Wordsworth speaks of

> that best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.

And that is surely what every good man feels. If ever we have performed Heaven's highest ministry, and done some service which angels might have coveted, it has been in some hour when on a bleak hillside we found a lost sheep of the Good Shepherd, and bore it home to care, to love, and to safety. And it was all done so simply. No church was near. We came not to God by the path of beautiful service. We preached no sermon. We sat in the house of loneliness, where men go softly, as though they

[1] J. M. Jones, *The Cup of Cold Water*, 13.

feared a haunting spectre, and simply spoke of the many mansions in the Father's home. We watched for a brief hour beside a child while the fever held him in its power, and spoke words of delicate sympathy to the woman who was his mother. We smiled upon a man when he was in the bitterness of defeat. We spoke a word of encouragement to one who had a heavy burden to carry. And our acts were cups of cold water to dry and parched lips, and carried God's great hope and encouragement to hearts that were lonely and sad.

¶ Mrs. Deane, who had often been a guest at Bishopscourt, writes: "When I first went out to Capetown in 1898, a friend gave me an introduction to the Archbishop and Mrs. West Jones, and said to me, 'I have written about you to the Archbishop, *and you will be right.*' And so, indeed, I was! The friendship I found at Bishopscourt, and my frequent visits to that lovely home, were the greatest happiness in my life at the Cape. Whatever the Archbishop did, he put his whole heart into it at the time, and this, I think, was largely the secret of his great charm. When he was talking to any one, he made that person feel that, for the moment, he or she was his one interest in life. And so, again, his heart was in his work or in his recreation, whichever it might be. I think that the Archbishop will be remembered much by his 'faithfulness in little things'—all those small details which go to make life pleasant. He liked to recollect and mark birthdays and other anniversaries, to give wedding presents, and to do all sorts of little, charming, unexpected acts of friendliness. He never omitted to answer a letter, either personally or by deputy, and I believe that he really enjoyed being asked to do kindnesses, if he had not already discovered his own way first. In more important matters he was ever ready to give advice and sympathy. Every one who knew him loved him. And no wonder!"[1]

> What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
> Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,
> For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
> And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
> God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
> To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
> All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
> For younger fellow-workers of the soil
> To wear for amulets. So others shall
> Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,

[1] M. H. M. Wood, *A Father in God: The Episcopate of W. West Jones*, 448.

From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near.[1]

3. The greatest things are poor, if the little things are not done—those minor courtesies which do so much to oil the wheels, to soften the jars, and to heal the heartaches of the world.

¶ The most miserable homes I have ever known have often been those that ought to have been the happiest; I envied them before I got to know the whole story. The house was a palace; the head of the household had worked hard, had made money; he could command every luxury, and it was his one pride that everything that money could command was at the disposal of every member of his home-circle; art had done its best, culture had added its sweetest ministries; everything there—everything but the delicate courtesies, the ingenious devices of love, which are life's most perfect graces.[2]

¶ In Oscar Wilde's tragic book, *De Profundis*, the author tells us how unspeakably he was helped in his shame, when a friend paid him the common courtesy of lifting his hat in his presence! But when these simplicities of life are consecrated they become sublimities, and they work the Lord's will with amazing fruitfulness. I think what is needed, above many things in our time, is the sanctification of conventionalities. Some men's "Good morning" falls upon your spirits like morning dew. There is one man in this city whom I sometimes meet upon a Sunday morning, and his "The Lord be with you" revives my spirit with the very ministry of grace. All these are cups of cold water.[3]

III.

The Motive.

The true value of an action is to be measured by its motive. The cup of cold water must be given "in the name of a disciple," or, as St. Mark puts it, "because ye are Christ's." There is nothing uncommon in the act of giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty one. But when we give the cup of cold water to the little ones

[1] E. B. Browning.
[2] J. M. Jones, *The Cup of Cold Water*, 11.
[3] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, April 27, 1905.

upon whose brow we read the name of Christ, who died for them, then the action is raised to the moral sphere and wins the commendation of the Lord of the little ones. A common deed becomes uncommon when done in the name and for the sake of Christ. Right motives transform men and their actions.

1. The expression, "these little ones," refers to His disciple-band, whom He regards as little children in their want of experience and advantage. They had the undeveloped perceptions of a little child; their spiritual senses were not sure and certain. They had a child's immaturity of mind, and a great thought overpowered them. They had a child's uncertainty of limb, and were easily made to stumble. They were "little ones" in the sphere of advantage. None of the "great ones" of the earth were among them. None of them occupied rank, or possessed wealth, or were adorned with culture. We find among them children of disadvantage with their powers undisciplined and unknown. Mr. Feeble-mind was there. Mr. Little-faith was among them. Mr. Limp-will was of their number. And these "little ones" are among us in all times. The roads are full of them. We may find them by every wayside. And the Lord looks upon them with tender pity and solicitous love.

¶ There is an Eastern story of a king who built a great temple at his own cost, no other one being allowed to do even the smallest part of the work. The king's name was put upon the temple as the builder of it. But, strange to say, when the dedication day came it was seen that a poor widow's name was there in place of the king's. The king was angry and gave command that the woman bearing the name on the scroll should be found. They discovered her at last among the very poor and brought her before the king. He demanded of her what she had done toward the building of the temple. She said, "Nothing." When pressed to remember anything she had done, she said that one day when she saw the oxen drawing the great stones past her cottage, exhausted in the heat and very weary, she had in pity given them some wisps of hay. And this simple kindness to dumb animals, prompted by a heart's compassion, weighed more in God's sight than all the king's vast outlay of money. What we truly do for Christ and in love is glorious in His sight.[1]

¶ *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, by James Russell Lowell, glows

[1] J. R. Miller, *Our New Edens*, 132.

with the glory of the right motive. Sir Launfal was a knight of the North Countree, who made a vow to travel over sea and land in search of the Holy Grail. Before his departure, he sleeps, and in the dreams of the night he sees a vision of what is and what will be. From the proudest hall in the North Countree, Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail, and saw a leper crouching by his gate, who begged with his hand and moaned as he sat. A loathing came over the knight, for this man, foul and bent, seemed a blot on the summer morn. In scorn he tossed him a bit of gold. Years seemed to pass, for in our dreams we live an age in a moment. Sir Launfal, old and grey, returns from his weary quest to find his heir installed in his place. Unknown, he is turned away from his own door.

As he sits down in the snow outside the gates, musing of sunnier climes, he hears once more the leper's voice, "For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms." The knight turns to the sound and sees again the leper cowering beside him, lone and white:

> And Sir Launfal said, "I behold in thee
> An image of Him who died on the tree;
> Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
> Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,
> And to thy life were not denied
> The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
> Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
> Behold, through Him, I give to thee!"

So he parted in twain his single crust, and broke the ice of the stream and gave the leper to eat and drink. Then, lo! a wondrous transformation took place.

> The leper no longer crouched at his side,
> But stood before him glorified,
> Shining and tall and fair and straight
> As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
> Himself the Gate whereby men can
> Enter the temple of God in Man.
>
> And the voice that was softer than silence said,
> "Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
> In many climes, without avail,
> Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
> Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
> Didst fill at the streamlet for Me but now;

This crust is My body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me."

Thus, with the true instinct of a prophet, did Lowell portray the right motive in its recognition. When Sir Launfal in scorn tossed the bit of gold to the leper, the Holy Grail was far away from the seeker; but when he shared his crust in the name of Christ, he found what he sought. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." [1]

2. Real goodness can never be confined to great acts only. It invests with sudden glory the life of him who ventures all and, leaving those things which men count dearest, goes to tell the story of the love of Jesus to men who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. But it also clothes with exquisite graciousness those who, by the lesser ministries of life, strive in all things to interpret the beauty of the spirit of God, and hour by hour to give fine revelations of the heart of Christ. It blazes out in some great piece of sacrifice or self-renunciation, but it shines with a persistent light in the exquisite self-forgetfulness of a life that desires only to do the will of Jesus. David consecrating great wealth to the building of a temple, and a poor widow casting two mites into the treasury; Moses delivering a whole people from cruel bondage, and a simple unknown man giving a cup of cold water only to one who is hot after life's fierce battle—all these manifest one and the selfsame goodness, which is the heart's love and loyalty to God flowing through all our deeds and consecrating them all.

¶ When Edward Payson was dying, he said, "I long to give a full cup of happiness to every human being." If with such urgency of desire we should daily go out among men, how selfishness would perish out of our dealings with them! What love would be in our homes! What changes would be wrought in human society! Now giving food to the needy, clothes to the naked, a toy to a child, opportunity for work to the unemployed,

[1] J. C. Owen.

a good book to one who will prize it as the thirsty do water—in such simple ways will streams be made to flow through life's deserts, and cups of comfort come to famishing lips.[1]

IV.

The Reward.

Some people tell us that it is defective morality in Christianity to bribe men to be good by promising them heaven, and that he who is actuated by such a motive is selfish. Now that fantastic and overstrained objection may be very simply answered by two considerations: self-regard is not selfishness, and Christianity does not propose the future reward as the motive for goodness. The motive for goodness is love to Jesus Christ; and if ever there was a man who did acts of Christian goodness only for the sake of what he would get by them, the acts were not Christian, because the motive was wrong. But it is a piece of fastidiousness to forbid us to reinforce the great Christian motive, which is love to Jesus Christ, by the thought of the recompense of reward. It is a stimulus and an encouragement, not the motive for goodness. This text shows us that it is a subordinate motive, for it says that the reception of a prophet, or of a righteous man, or of "one of these little ones," which is rewardable, is the reception "in the name of" a prophet, a disciple, and so on; or, in other words, recognizing the prophet, or the righteousness, or the disciple for what he is, and because he is that, and not because of the reward, receiving him with sympathy and solace and help.

1. What is the reward of heaven? "Eternal life," people say. Yes! "Blessedness." Yes! But where does the life come from, and where does the blessedness come from? They are both derived, they come from God in Christ; and in the deepest sense, and in the only true sense, God is heaven, and God is the reward of heaven. "I am thy shield" so long as dangers need to be guarded against, and thereafter "thy exceeding great reward." It is the possession of God that makes all the heaven of heaven, the immortal life which His children receive, and the blessedness with which they are enraptured. We are heirs of immortality, we are

[1] G. M. Meacham, in *The Homiletic Review*, xx. 527.

heirs of life, we are heirs of blessedness, because, and in the measure in which, we become heirs of God.

¶ "You forgot to mention where heaven is," said the good lady to her pastor after a sermon on the better land. "On yonder hill-top stands a cottage, madam," replied the man of God; "a widow lives there in want; she has no bread, no fuel, no medicine, and her child is at the point of death. If you will carry to her this afternoon some little cup of cold water in the name of Him who went about doing good, you will find the answer to your inquiry."[1]

2. In heaven as on earth men will get just as much of God as they can hold; and in heaven as on earth capacity for receiving God is determined by character. The gift is one, the reward is one, and yet the reward is infinitely various. It is the same light which glows in all the stars, but "star differeth from star in glory." It is the same wine, the new wine of the Kingdom, that is poured into all the vessels, but the vessels are of divers magnitudes, though each be full to the brim.

3. The reward is both present and future.

(1) There is present compensation for doing good. It is impossible to do good with a loving heart to Christ without growing good. Every act of kindness done in the name of a disciple, and every work engaged in and prosecuted for His sake, and every gift conscientiously made and bestowed for the advancement of His glory, expands the heart, enlarges the sympathies, and deepens the sources of its joy. There is no such pleasure to the heart as that which proceeds from a deed of Christian benevolence and kindness, done from love to the Saviour and His cause. Besides, the heart's true pleasure is increased in the proportion that it is opened by the expanding power of true Christian love through acts of Christian kindness done for the Saviour's sake. The deed reacts in blessing on the doer. Every lesson of Christian truth which a Sabbath-school teacher imparts makes more precious to him the water of life as he fills up his cup with blessing for the souls of others. Every word we utter for Christ, every deed we perform, every gift we bestow, is even now in its reactive influence a present reward.

[1] M. J. McLeod, *Heavenly Harmonies for Earthly Living*, 38.

¶ Expositors of sacred Scripture have spoken diversely concerning these rewards. For some say that all of them refer to the future bliss: as Ambrose, on Luke. But Augustine says that they pertain to the present life. Whereas Chrysostom says in his Homilies that some of them pertain to the future life, but some to the present. For the elucidation of which we are to consider that the hope of future bliss may exist in us in virtue of two things: first, in virtue of a certain preparation or qualification for future bliss, which comes through merit; and secondly, by virtue of a certain imperfect beginning of future bliss in holy men, even in this life. For the promise of fruit in a tree is there in one fashion when it throws out its green foliage; but in another fashion when the first formation of the fruit begins to appear. And thus the merits spoken of in the Beatitudes are of the nature of preparations or qualifications for blessedness, whether perfect or incipient. Whereas the rewards set forth may be either the perfect bliss itself, in which case they pertain to the future life: or a certain beginning of bliss, as found in perfect men, and in that case they pertain to the present life. For as soon as a man begins to make progress in the acts appropriate to the virtues and (spiritual) gifts, there may be good hope of him that he shall come to the perfection alike of the pilgrimage [of earth] and of the fatherland [of heaven].[1]

¶ In helping others we benefit ourselves; we heal our own wounds in binding up those of others.[2]

(2) The highest reward will come hereafter. The present life is only the seed-plot of eternity. "Nothing human ever dies." All our deeds drag after them inevitable consequences; but if you will put your trust in Jesus Christ He will not deal with you according to your sins, nor reward you according to your iniquities; and the darkest features of the recompense of your evil will all be taken away by the forgiveness which we have in His blood. If you will trust yourselves to Him you will have that eternal life which is not wages, but a gift; which is not reward, but a free bestowment of God's love. And then, built upon that foundation on which alone men can build their hopes, their thoughts, their characters, their lives, however feeble may be our efforts, however narrow may be our sphere,—though we be neither prophets nor sons of prophets, and though our righteousness may

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Secundæ, lxix. § 2.

[2] St. Ambrose.

be all stained and imperfect, yet, to our own amazement and to God's glory, we shall find, when the fire is kindled which reveals and tests our works, that, by the might of humble faith in Christ, we have built upon that foundation, gold and silver and precious stones; and shall receive the reward given to every man whose work abides that trial by fire.

"My day has all gone"—'twas a woman who spoke,
As she turned her face to the sunset glow—
"And I have been busy the whole day long;
Yet for my work there is nothing to show."

No painting nor sculpture her hand had wrought;
No laurel of fame her labour had won.
What was she doing in all the long day,
With nothing to show at set of sun?

Humbly and quietly all the long day
Had her sweet service for others been done;
Yet for the labours of heart and of hand
What could she show at set of sun?

Ah, she forgot that our Father in heaven
Ever is watching the work that we do,
And records He keeps of all we forget,
Then judges our work with judgment that's true;

For an angel writes down in a volume of gold
The beautiful deeds that all do below.
Though nothing she had at set of the sun,
The angel above had something to show.

The Great Invitation.

LITERATURE.

Allon (H.), *The Indwelling Christ*, 43.
Beecher (H. W.), *Henry Ward Beecher in England*, 101.
Brandt (J. L.), *Soul Saving*, 251.
Burrell (D. J.), *The Wondrous Cross*, 18.
Burrows (W. O.), *The Mystery of the Cross*, 141.
Chapman (H. B.), *Sermons in Symbols*, 8.
Clark (H. W.), *Laws of the Inner Kingdom*, 98.
Curnock (N.), *Comfortable Words*, 56.
Denney (J.), *The Way Everlasting*, 308.
Dods (M.), *Christ and Man*, 38.
Holden (J. S.), *The Pre-eminent Lord*, 180.
Hopkins (E. H.), *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, 79.
Hutton (W. R.), *Low Spirits*, 147.
Kelman (J.), *Redeeming Judgment*, 19.
Maclaren (A.), *A Rosary of Christian Graces*, 145.
Morgan (G. C.), *The Missionary Manifesto*, 143.
Neville (W. G.), *Sermons*, 9.
Owen (J. W.), *Some Australian Sermons*, 93.
Pierson (A. T.), in *Dr. Pierson and His Message*, 233.
Rate (J.), *Leaves from the Tree of Life*, 119.
Russell (A.), *The Light that Lighteth Every Man*, 293.
Shepard (J. W.), *Light and Life*, 279.
Temple (W.), *Repton School Sermons*, 84.
Christian World Pulpit, xii. 142 (A. P. Peabody); xxiv. 30 (H. W. Beecher); xlii. 102 (G. MacDonald); lxiv. 289 (W. B. Carpenter); lxvii. 246 (C. S. Horne); lxviii. 183 (E. Rees).
Church of England Pulpit, lxi. 414 (H. E. Ryle).
Weekly Pulpit, i. 71 (C. H. Spurgeon).

The Great Invitation.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Matt. xi. 28.

1. There were several reasons which made this gracious invitation and glorious promise specially appropriate to the age in which it was spoken. It was an age of political revolution. The old Roman Empire was breaking up, and already the seeds were being sown in it which left it, a few hundred years afterwards, an easy prey to the incursions of the Goths. It was an age of moral collapse. The old stern morality which had made Rome was breaking up like rotten ice. Marriage became a mere temporary convenience, which lasted for a time and then was laid aside. It was an age of social unrest. It was an age of much despair in individual souls. As always, with the decay of faith came in the prevalence of suicide.

> When all the blandishments of life are gone,
> The coward slinks to death, the brave live on.

And the great number of suicides at that time in the Roman Empire pointed to the despair which was creeping over soul after soul. It was in the midst of such a world that Jesus Christ uttered this splendid invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

¶ "Despair is the vilest of words." That expresses Fitzjames's whole belief and character. Faith may be shaken and dogmas fade into meaningless jumbles of words: science may be unable to supply any firm ground for conduct. Still we can quit ourselves like men. From doubt and darkness he can still draw the practical conclusion, "Be strong and of a good courage." And therefore, Fitzjames could not be a pessimist in the proper sense; for the true pessimist is one who despairs of the universe. Such a man can only preach resignation to inevitable evil, and his best

hope is extinction. Fitzjames goes out of his way more than once to declare that he sees nothing sublime in Buddhism. "Nirvana," he says in a letter, "always appeared to me to be at bottom a cowardly ideal. For my part I like far better the Carlyle or Calvinist notion of the world as a mysterious hall of doom, in which one must do one's fated part to the uttermost, acting and hoping for the best and trusting that somehow or other our admiration of the 'noblest human qualities' will be justified."[1]

2. Those to whom Jesus spoke that day in Galilee were conspicuously the labouring and the heavy laden. They were a labouring and a heavy-laden people, because they were in the worst sense a conquered people. The lake district was rich in national products, the fields brought forth largely, and the lake with its fishings was a very mine of wealth. But the land was overrun by the invader. The conqueror's tax-gatherer was everywhere to be seen, and the wealth of Galilee went to feed the luxury of Rome. Hence the husbandmen and fishermen in the worst sense laboured and were heavy laden. Their rich crops fell to their sickle, their nets were often full to the point of breaking, necessitating hard toil to bring them to the shore, but the tax-gatherer stood over the threshing-floor and in the market, and swept the profits into the emperor's hands. Nor did their revolts bring them anything but harder labours and a heavier load. Their wrestling and struggling only procured them the sharp pricking of the goad and the firmer binding on their shoulders of the yoke.

¶ How large the taxes were in Palestine about the time of Christ will probably never be known. Shortly after Herod's death a committee of Jews stated to the emperor that Herod had filled the nation full of poverty and that they had borne more calamities from Herod in a few years than their fathers had during all the interval of time that had passed since they had returned from Babylon in the reign of Xerxes. It is said that he exacted about three million dollars from the people. His children did not receive quite that amount, but to raise what they received and what the Roman government demanded, nearly everything had been taxed. There was a tax on the produce of land, one-tenth for grain and one-fifth for wine and fruit. There was a tax

[1] Leslie Stephen, *Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen*, 458.

of one denarius on every person, exempting only aged people over sixty-five years, and girls and boys under the age of twelve and fourteen respectively. Then there was an income-tax. There were also taxes levied on trades, such as that of hosier, weaver, furrier, and goldsmith, and on movable property, such as horses, oxen, asses, ships, and slaves. The duties paid on imported goods varied from two and one-half to twelve per cent. Then the homes were taxed, at least the city homes, and there was bridge money and road money to be paid. There was also a tax on what was publicly bought and sold, for the removal of which tax the people pleaded with Archelaus, apparently in vain. Besides this, every city had its local administration, and raised money to pay its officials, maintain and build synagogues, elementary schools, public baths, and roads, the city walls, gates, and other general requirements. Tacitus relates how the discontent occasioned by the burdensome taxation in the year 17 A.D. assumed a most threatening character not only in Judea, but also throughout Syria. Taxes were farmed out to the highest bidders, who in turn would farm them out again. They who got the contract were not paid by the government from the taxes they collected, so that their support, or income, must be added to the taxes. How large that was we cannot know, but it was very large, as the collectors would, taking advantage of their position, often be very extortionate. Amid these unfortunate economic conditions—anarchy, war, extravagance, and taxation—the people grew poorer and poorer. Business became more and more interrupted, and want, in growing frequency, showed its emaciated features.[1]

3. But the national feeling which held them together as a people, had it not its side of faith? It had not. Faith, as it found expression in the Rabbi's words, only added a thousand times to the labour and the yoke. What of money the tax-gatherer left the priest devoured, and what the priest left the scribe laid hands upon; and as the masses sank deeper and deeper in poverty, only the more were there heaped upon them the curses of the law. Robbery, impiety, cursing, were all the multitude saw in faith. Can we not picture that weary crowd of waiting men and women, with, as Carlyle says, "hard hands, crooked, coarse; their rugged faces all weather-tanned, besoiled; their backs all bent, their straight limbs and fingers so deformed; themselves, as it were, encrusted with the thick adhesions and defacements of their

[1] G. D. Heuver, *The Teachings of Jesus Concerning Wealth*, 31.

hopeless labour; and seeing no cause to believe in, and no hope for rest"? But Jesus spoke of rest, and not idly, or to delude them with a dream. He, like themselves, was a toiler, and offered no hope that with His own hand He would drive out the Roman, or even put the priest and scribe to flight. He did not speak of rest in the sense of relief from labour. His exhortation, "Take my yoke upon you," makes that conclusive. His relief and rescue were along a totally different line. Rest can be understood only when labour is properly undertaken. When work is regarded as a task, then the only possible rest is relief from it. If, however, labour is undertaken as cordial service, it is quite different. Rest may then mean additional labour; it does then mean harmony and peace of mind and soul.

¶ "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." It is thus that this saying of Jesus is rendered in the Latin Bible, and, after it, in the version of old John Wycliffe. And thus rendered, it was associated by the devout men of mediæval days with the sacred ordinance of the Supper. "Thou biddest me," says St. Thomas à Kempis, "confidently approach Thee, if I would have part with Thee; and accept the nourishments of immortality, if I desire to obtain eternal life and glory. 'Come,' sayest Thou, 'unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'"[1]

I.

The Call.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

1. In the history of the world was ever an utterance made like this? Was ever a claim of power or an assertion of supremacy so vast, so calm, so confident? Could we have endured it from one of the teachers of the world—from Socrates, from Seneca, from Isaac Newton, from Kant, or from Shakespeare? Would not its utterance have repelled and disgusted us? Its arrogance would have been intolerable. And yet have these words from the lips of Christ ever produced repulsion? Is it not the case that they have ever been regarded as among the most

[1] D. Smith, *The Feast of the Covenant*, 123.

gracious and lovely of the Saviour's words? And why so? Has it not been because it was known and felt that these were the words of Him who was God as well as Man? They follow in this chapter of St. Matthew the verse in which Jesus has said, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father." The beauty and the sweetness of the invitation, "Come unto me," depend upon the sovereign right to give it. He who is the Son of God as well as the Son of Man alone has the right. In His mouth alone such words possess not only beauty but also the force of genuineness.

Thus we see that beneath the tenderness of this evangelical message, "Come unto me," lies the bed-rock foundation of the Christian faith, that Christ is God as well as Man. Call it dogma; if dogma be the epitome of belief, it is the dogma of dogmas. Call it Christian truth; it is the one truth without which Christianity fades into an airy system of baseless speculation, and its claims shrink and shrivel to the dimensions of a human imposture. It is the Divinity of our Lord that makes these words of His so splendid and inspiring in their strength and comprehensiveness. There is no hesitation in their tone; they strike no apologetic or self-depreciatory note. It is not the outcome of long argument to advance or prove His claims. It is not the vague pronouncement of bliss and reward upon those who followed His cause. No; it is the simple authoritative personal invitation of Christ to the people of the world; it is an imperial message given in infinite love and proclaimed with infinite power to the souls of men and women. And we, whether we teach it to our children or repeat it to the dying, can attach no adequate meaning to the words unless we are convinced in our hearts that He who spoke them was God as well as Man, and could really give what He promised.

¶ We are making trial of the belief that in Christ we see the Power by which the world is governed—the Almighty. But the world, if we regard its present condition in isolation, is most manifestly not governed by any such Power. The Sin and Pain of the world we know cannot be themselves the goal of the Purpose of God, if God is the Father of Jesus Christ. Either then Christ is not the revelation of God, or else the world as we see it does not express its real meaning. Only, in fact, as Christ is drawing men to Himself from generation to generation is the victory over evil won, and His claim to reveal the Father vindi-

cated; we can only regard Him as Divine, and supreme over the world, if we can regard Him as somehow including in His Personality all mankind. If the Life of Christ is just an event in human history, what right have we to say that the Power which directs that history is manifest here rather than in Julius Cæsar or even Nero? We can only say this, if He is drawing all men to Himself so that in Him we see what mankind is destined to become.[1]

2. The call is addressed to all who labour and are heavy laden. To all; not merely to a few favoured souls, not merely to the Jews; it is an invitation to mankind. Our Lord, when He uttered the words, was looking out with the gaze of Omniscience across the ages. He saw each human soul, with its capacity for eternal blessedness or endless loss. Generation after generation swept before His vision, as He longed that they might all come unto Him and find rest. No one is excluded, for all need the healing of Christ. Christ saw—as the painter of "The Vale of Tears" has vividly portrayed in his last picture—all conditions of men, weary of the sorrows, trials and burdens of human life, as well as of its pleasures, ambitions and prizes, when He uttered the tender, authoritative, universal invitation, "Come unto me."

(1) First, He invites those who labour; or, perhaps more correctly, all who are toiling. Can we venture to reconstruct the scene? Close beside Him stand His immediate disciples, who alone had been privileged to hear the language of His prayer. But beyond the circle of His immediate followers is gathered a crowd of the inhabitants of Capernaum, who had been passing homeward at the close of the day. Labourers would be there in plenty, coming back from their toil in the fields; women also, returning from the market or the well; and fishermen too, doubtless, who had stopped awhile to listen on the way to their nocturnal labours on the deep. On the outskirts of the crowd there might be others, shop-keepers, working men, and farmers; and perhaps women such as Mary Magdalene, for Magdala was not far from Capernaum. Such, in some degree at least, was the character of the multitude on whom our Lord's eyes could rest. And as He gazed upon that group of peasants, representative as they were of human weariness and suffering, there welled up in

[1] W. Temple, in *Foundations*, 245.

His heart a great compassion for the souls before Him, weighed down with a load that was too heavy for them to bear. So, conscious of His power to alleviate the woes and sorrows of humanity and to lighten the common burdens of mankind, He who claimed a knowledge of the unknown God, and had been rejoicing in communion with the Father, opened His arms to the listening multitude and cried, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(2) But Christ called not only those who labour or toil; He called those also who are burdened or heavy laden to Him. As the idea of toil refers to what we may call the active side of life, to what we do or attempt to do, so the term "heavy laden" or "burdened" refers to the passive side, to that which we bear or endure. Frequently this latter is a condition added to, or even responsible for, the former. We may be toiling while we are heavy laden, or our work may actually be toil because while we work we have also to bear a heavy burden. If we consider the burdens of life they fall into two classes; we may term these the self-imposed and the inevitable: those which are due, and those which are not due, to our own actions. And many of us would be surprised, after a strict self-examination, to find how large a proportion of the whole of our burdens the self-imposed ones are. We may not like to confess this, but still it is true. The burdens imposed by carelessness and thoughtlessness, by sin in the present and in the past, by the force of evil habits which have been allowed to grow unchecked, by our declining to exercise self-discipline and by our refusing to submit to the wise discipline of others—all these various not inevitable burdens will be found to outweigh and outnumber the burdens which are really outside our own control.

(3) What must especially have distressed Jesus and filled Him with pity was that men turned their very religion into a burden and a toil. That which was meant to give them strength to bear all other burdens they turned into an additional load. Instead of using their carriage to carry themselves and all their belongings, they strove to take it on their backs and carry it. All that religion seemed to do for them was to make life harder, to fill it with a thousand restrictions and fretting duties. They toiled to keep a multitude of observances which no man could keep; they

bound heavy burdens of penances and duties and laid them on their backs, as if thus they could please God. The sinner was in despair, and the religious man a heartless performer. They had fancied that God was like themselves, a poor little creature, revengeful, spiteful, liking to see men suffering for sin and crushed under His petty tyrannies. They thought of a God who must be propitiated by careful and exact performances and to whom the sinner could find access only after crushing penances. As if the pain of sin were not enough, and as if the bitterness of a misspent life were not itself intolerable, they sought to embitter life still further by emptying it of all natural joy and by hampering it with countless scruples.

¶ The kernel of the law was found in the Jewish scriptures. But this was augmented by four tremendous accumulations. First, there was the Mishna, which was an elaborate reiteration of the law with innumerable embellishments. Then there was the Midrash, which consisted of volumes of the minutest explanations of the meaning of every part of the law. Then there were other bulky tomes called the Talmud, which was a formulation of the law into doctrine at portentous length. And finally there was an intricate mass of comments and legal decisions of the Rabbis. And for a Jew to live right he must be in complete harmony with all this mass of accumulated tradition, speculation, allegory, and fantastic comment. And as every Rabbi had the right and, indeed, the duty to add to it, it is easy to see how the burden would grow. Rabbis were said to make the law heavy, to burden people, and many of them regarded this as their chief duty.[1]

(4) But primarily Christ addressed Himself to the sin problem. Indisputably sin is the cause of all unrest, the poison which has fevered every life. Sin is the root of all the weakness and weariness which rob life of its true quality. Sin it is that blurs the vision of God, and blinds men to His unfailing nearness and help, as also to the true issues of life, for the realizing of which they do so much need Him. And when Christ offers rest to the weary and heavy laden, He is proposing to deal with the sin which has created their need.

¶ Sin is the greatest disturbance of men's souls, far deeper than any agitation or perturbation that may arise from external

[1] N. H. Marshall.

circumstances. It is our unlawful desires that shake us; it is our unlawful acts that disturb us, rousing conscience, which may speak accusingly or be ominously silent, and, in either case, will disturb our true repose. As our great dramatist has it, "Macbeth has murdered sleep." There is no rest for the man whose conscience is stinging him, as, more or less, all consciences do that are not reconciled and quieted by Christ's great sacrifice. Such an one is like the troubled sea "that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt"; whilst they who come to Jesus are like some little tarn amongst the hills, surrounded by sheltering heights, that "heareth not the loud winds when they call," and has no more movement than is enough to prevent stagnation, while its little ripples kiss the pure silver sand on the beach; and in their very motion there is rest.[1]

¶ Browning has suggested that, among those who heard the Lord Jesus invite the weary and heavy laden to come to Him, was one of the two robbers who were eventually crucified at His side. The poem describes the emotions which passed through the man's soul, and he is made to say:

> The words have power to haunt me. Long ago
> I heard them from a Stranger—One who turned,
> And looked upon me as I went, and seemed
> To know my face, although I knew Him not.
> The face was weary; yet He spoke
> Of giving rest—He needed rest, I think—
> Yet patiently He stood and spoke to those
> Who gathered round Him, and He turned
> And looked on me. He could not know
> How sinful was my life, a robber's life,
> Amid the caves and rocks. And yet He looked
> As though He knew it all, and, knowing,
> Longed to save me from it.

It may have been so, or it may not. Browning's fancy may have a basis in fact; we cannot tell. But this at least we know —that he who suffered by the side of Jesus is one of those who have proved the truth of His saying, and have found Him able to make good His word.[2]

[1] A. Maclaren, *A Rosary of Christian Graces*, 152.
[2] H. T. Knight.

II.

The Gift.

"I will give you rest."

1. Rest, then, is a gift; it is not earned. It is not the emolument of toil; it is the dowry of grace. It is not the prize of endeavour, its birth precedes endeavour, and is indeed the spring and secret of it. It is not the perquisite of culture, for between it and culture there is no necessary and inevitable communion. It broods in strange and illiterate places, untouched by scholastic and academic refinement, but it abides also in cultured souls which have been chastened by the manifold ministry of the schools. It is not a work, but a fruit; not the product of organization, but the sure and silent issue of a relationship. "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest."

¶ "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Who but would test this gracious promise? Who is altogether free from the heavy load of pain, either bodily, mental, or spiritual? Yet how many spend half their lives in vainly seeking rest! If ever there was a question which it concerns us all to answer it is this, Where is rest to be found? The larger part of mankind seek it in wealth, in honours, in worldly ease; but they do not find it. Covetousness, greed, envy, fraud, conspire to spoil all thought of rest in the good things of this world. Others seek rest in themselves, but what can be expected from our weak, changeable natures? Society, literature, science may occupy, but they cannot satisfy or rest, the heart. There is no rest for the heart of man save in God, who made him for Himself. But how shall we rest in God? By giving ourselves wholly to Him. If you give yourselves by halves, you cannot find full rest—there will ever be a lurking disquiet in that half which is withheld; and for this reason it is that so few Christians attain to a full, steadfast, unchanging peace—they do not seek rest in God only, or give themselves up to Him without reserve. True rest is as unchanging as God Himself—like Him it rises above all earthly things: it is secret, abundant, without a regret or a wish. It stills all passion, restrains the imagination, steadies the mind, controls all wavering: it endures alike in the time of tribulation and the time of wealth; in temptation and trial, as when the world shines brightly on us. Christ tells you

of His peace which the world can neither give nor take away, because it is God's gift only. Such peace may undergo many an assault, but it will be confirmed thereby, and rise above all that would trouble it. He who has tasted it would not give it in exchange for all this life can give: and death is to him a passage from this rest to that of eternity.[1]

2. Many of the great gifts of life are not transmissible. Ask the artist for the power by which he gives us the inspired painting, ask the poet for the power by which he is able to sing and touch men's hearts into enthusiasm, and they cannot give it. There is always just the inexpressible something which they can never impart. It is the spirit of the thing, which is incommunicable, the Divine touch; the fairy has not given her kiss at birth. But here is Christ who can impart restfulness of soul, that which transforms the soul from being worldly and agitated to being a spirit possessed of calm. It seems to be a miracle that a subtle quality should be transmissible from the Lord to His disciples. Here He stands above all other instructors in being able to pass on that which otherwise is incommunicable, but which, in His hand, has been a real persistent heritage in the Church.

¶ On the way to Chapra from Ratnapur Miss Dawe, of the Church of England Zenana Mission at Ratnapur, told me of a Hindu with whom God's Spirit worked before he met any missionary and gave him a sense of sin, so that he became dissatisfied. He visited various places of pilgrimage seeking rest. One day he picked up a piece of paper on which were written the words: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He did not know where they came from and went inquiring from one to another. At length a fakir who had heard something of Christianity told him they were to be found in the Christian books. Then he came to a C.M.S. Mission at Krishnagar, where he was instructed, and a Bible given him, and he was baptized. Then his great desire was for his wife. He wrote to her telling her he was a Christian, and asking her to come to him. She was a remarkable woman, and had taught herself to read through her little brother, who went to school. She consented to come to him, as she was his wife. There was great opposition from the family, but he carried her off. On his way he passed a tree where Miss Dawe was preaching, and took his wife to her. Miss D. was astonished that she knew how to read, and put a New Testament into her hand

[1] Jean Nicolas Grou, *The Hidden Life of God.*

On opening it, her eye fell on: "Let not your heart be troubled" —just the word for her. Miss D. pitched her tent near her village and gave her a course of instruction every day for some weeks. At the end she wished to be baptized. This was many years ago. They are now in Calcutta, working in connexion with the London Missionary Society.[1]

3. The rest which Christ gives is based on a perfect reconcilement to God. He gives us an eternal settlement, adjusting us to a place which we feel to be thoroughly suitable, and satisfying all in us which we feel deserves to be satisfied. He gives us rest by making life intelligible and by making it worthy; by showing us how through all its humbling and sordid conditions we can live as God's children; by delivering us from guilty fear of God and from sinful cravings; by setting us free from all foolish ambitions and by shaming us out of worldly greed and all the fret and fever that come of worldly greed; by filling our hearts with realities which still our excited pursuit of shadows, and by bringing into our spirit the abiding joy and strength of His love for us. We enter into the truest rest when we believe that He takes part with us and that we can depend upon Him.

What the man who is burdened with a bad conscience needs is the assurance that there is a love in God deeper and stronger than sin. Not a love which is indifferent to sin or makes light of it. Not a love to which the bad conscience, which is so tragically real to man, and so fatally powerful in his life, is a mere misapprehension to be ignored or brushed aside as insignificant. No, but a love to which sin, and its condemnation in conscience, and its deadly power, are all that they are to man, and more; a love which sees sin, which feels it, which is wounded by it, which condemns and repels it with an annihilating condemnation, yet holds fast to man through it all with Divine power to redeem, and to give final deliverance from it. This is what the man needs who is weighed down and broken and made impotent by a bad conscience, and this is what he finds when he comes to Jesus.

I hear the low voice call that bids me come,—
Me, even me, with all my grief opprest,
With sins that burden my unquiet breast,
And in my heart the longing that is dumb,

[1] *Life Radiant: Memorials of the Rev. Francis Paynter*, 144.

Yet beats forever, like a muffled drum,
For all delights whereof I, dispossest,
Pine and repine, and find nor peace nor rest
This side the haven where He bids me come.

He bids me come and lay my sorrows down,
And have my sins washed white by His dear grace;
He smiles—what matter, then, though all men frown?
Naught can assail me, held in His embrace;
And if His welcome home the end may crown,
Shall I not hasten to that heavenly place?[1]

4. The rest which Christ gives is not rest from toil, but rest in toil. That toil may be excessive, may be incompatible with health, may be very slightly remunerative, may be accompanied with conditions which are disagreeable, painful, depressing; but Christ does not emancipate the individual from this toil. He does indeed slowly influence society so that the slave awakes to his rights and the slave-owner acknowledges them; and so that all grievances which oppress the various sections of society are at length measured by Christ's standard of righteousness and charity, and tardy but lasting justice is at length done. But until the whole of society is imbued with Christian principle thousands of individuals must suffer, and often suffer more intensely because they are Christians. Yet even to ordinary toil Christ brings what may well be called "rest." The Christian slave has thoughts and hopes that brighten his existence; he leads two lives at once—the overdriven, crushed, hopeless life of the slave, and the hopeful, free, eternal, Divine life of Christ's free man. And, wherever in the most shameful parts of our social system the underpaid and overdriven workman or workwoman believes in Christ, there rest enters the spirit—the hunger, the cold, the tyrannous selfishness, the blank existence are outweighed by the consciousness of Christ's sympathy, and by the sure hope that even through all present distress and misery that sympathy is guiding the soul to a lasting joy and a worthy life. And surely this is glory indeed, that from Christ's words and life there should shine through all these centuries a brightness that penetrates the darkest shades of modern life and carries to broken hearts a reviving joy that nothing else can attempt to bring.

[1] Louise Chandler Moulton, *In the Garden of Dreams.*

¶ There is a sweet monastery in Florence, fragrant with sacred memories, rich with blessed history to the religious soul. Its very dust is dear, for there the saintly Bishop Antonio lived as Christ lived, and there the prophetic Savonarola wore out his noble heart, and there also lived the pious painter, Fra Bartolommeo. It stands the forlorn relic of a dream. And even yet it breathes of the true domestic peace, with secluded cloisters where the noise of the city is hushed; with its little cells, whose bare whitewashed walls are clad with the pure delicate frescoes of the angelic painter—the reflection of his own pure soul. In the centre is a little garden kissed by the sunshine; and up from it is seen the deep blue of the Italian sky, speaking of eternal peace. It is natural to think that one might cultivate the soul there; might there forget the world, its hate, ambitions, and fierce passions. It is a dream. Christ's peace is not a hothouse plant blighted by the wind; it rears its head to meet the storm. Christ's ideal is love in the world, though not of the world. It is rest for the toil; it is peace for the battle. You must have a cloister in your heart; you must not give your heart to a cloister. You can have it—you, in your narrow corner of life; you, amid your distractions and labours; you, with your fiery trials and temptations; you, with your sorrow and your tears. It cannot be got for gold; it cannot be lost through poverty. The world cannot give it; the world cannot take it away. It is not given by any manipulation of outward circumstances; it rules in the heart; it is an inward state. To be spiritually-minded is life and peace.[1]

¶ My real feelings about my work and duty have been so aroused by recent experiences that I do not estimate these external matters as I used to do. And it would be well indeed for my peace of mind—I do not see any other real source of peace—if I could rise above them altogether, and do all I do simply from a sense of duty, from thoughtful and quiet religious impulses, making my work as thorough and as good as I can, and leaving all the rest to God. *That is the only rest,* if one could only attain to it; but with an excitable, sensitive nature like mine, so alive to the outside world, and with such an excessive craving for sympathy, it is very difficult to do this. If I could only learn quietness and patience, and not self-trust, which is simply self-delusion; but I trust in God. If God will, I will learn this.[2]

[1] Hugh Black.

[2] *Memoir of Principal Tulloch,* 202.

Rest Under the Yoke.

LITERATURE.

Ainger (A.), *Sermons Preached in the Temple Church*, 39.
Allon (H.), *The Indwelling Christ*, 43.
Brandt (J. L.), *Soul Saving*, 251.
Burrows (W. O.), *The Mystery of the Cross*, 141.
Chadwick (W. E.), *Christ and Everyday Life*, 11.
Curnock (N.), *Comfortable Words*, 56.
Denney (J.), *The Way Everlasting*, 308.
Dods (M.), *Christ and Man*, 38.
Fürst (A.), *True Nobility of Character*, 302.
Holden (J. S.), *The Pre-eminent Lord*, 180.
„ „ *Life's Flood-Tide*, 70.
Kelman (J.), *Redeeming Judgment*, 19.
Knight (H. T.), *The Cross, the Font, and the Altar*, 1.
Little (W. J. K.), *Characteristics of the Christian Life*, 223.
„ „ *The Hopes of the Passion*, 156.
Maclaren (A.), *A Rosary of Christian Graces*, 145.
Neville (W. G.), *Sermons*, 9.
Owen (J. W.), *Some Australian Sermons*, 93.
Rate (J.), *Leaves from the Tree of Life*, 1.
Russell (A.), *The Light that Lighteth Every Man*, 293.
Temple (W.), *Repton School Sermons*, 84.
British Congregationalist, Jan. 18, 1914 (A. E. Garvie).
Christian World, May 20, 1909 (J. D. Jones).
Christian World Pulpit, x. 309 (H. W. Beecher); xii. 222 (H. W. Beecher); xl. 396 (H. Ross); xli. 156 (T. R. Stevenson); lxv. 305 (J. H. Jowett); lxix. 81 (A. F. W. Ingram); lxxix. 68 (A. B. Scott); lxxxii. 43 (A. C. Dixon).
Church of England Pulpit, lxi. 414 (H. E. Ryle).

Rest Under the Yoke.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—Matt. xi. 29, 30.

1. Christ saw the people as poor, toiling, jaded animals labouring in the yoke, carrying an almost intolerable load, and in sheer compassion and love He cried to them, and said, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." And this "rest" He proposed to give, not by relieving them of every yoke and burden, but by an exchange of yokes and burdens. He proposed to take away the heavy yoke they were then bearing, and to give them His yoke instead. "The yoke you are bearing," He said to them, in effect, "is too galling; the burden you are carrying is too heavy; they are more than flesh and blood can bear. Take off your yoke, lay aside your burden, and take Mine instead, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

2. So Christ also lays a yoke upon us. But what sort of yoke? Justin Martyr, who lived in the first half of the second century of the Christian era, tells us that when Jesus was a carpenter at Nazareth He used to make "ploughs and yokes for oxen." It has been suggested that this ancient Church Father derived that curious piece of information from the now lost "Gospel according to the Hebrews." If we may accept it as correct,—and it comes from very old times,—Jesus was a yoke-maker by trade. Then He knew what make of yoke would be hard to wear and what easy. The easy yoke would be one that would not gall the back of the poor ox on which it was fitted, one, perhaps, that was deliberately eased so as not to press on a tender place. This is what a considerate artisan would be careful to see to; and we may be sure that in His artisan life Jesus would be thoughtful for the welfare of the dumb animals with which He

had to do. He is considerate as a Master of human souls. There are some whose slightest commands sting like insults, and others so gracious, genial, and considerate that their very orders are accepted by the servants as favours. It is a delight to serve such masters. Their yoke is easy. Now Jesus Christ is the most considerate of masters. As Milton said, reflecting on the unwelcome limitations imposed upon his service by his blindness, "Doth God exact day labour, light denied?"

¶ In using the metaphor of a yoke, Christ was probably employing an expression which was already proverbial. In the Psalms of Solomon, which are a little earlier than the time of Christ, we have: "We are beneath Thy yoke for evermore, and beneath the rod of Thy chastening" (vii. 8); and "He shall possess the peoples of the heathen to serve Him beneath His yoke" (xvii. 32). "The yoke" was a common Jewish metaphor for discipline or obligation, especially in reference to the service of the Law. Thus, in the Apocalypse of Baruch: "For lo! I see many of Thy people who have withdrawn from Thy covenant, and cast from them the yoke of Thy Law" (xli. 3). Comp. Lam. iii. 27; Ecclus. li. 26; Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1; *Pirqe Aboth*, iii. 8. In the *Didache* (vi. 2) we have "the whole yoke of the Lord," which probably means the Law in addition to the Gospel.[1]

Taking the text in its own simplicity we find three things in it—

I. The Yoke—"Take my yoke upon you."
II. The Lesson—"Learn of me."
III. The Rest—"Ye shall find rest unto your souls."

I.

The Yoke.

"Take my yoke upon you."

1. When Jesus spoke these words He referred to the yoke He Himself wore as Man. That was the yoke of a perfect surrender to the will of God, and absolute submission to His throne. To all who came to Him He said, "Take my yoke; the yoke I wear is the yoke I impose upon you. As I am submissive to government,

[1] A. Plummer.

so also must you be, if you are to exercise authority." Said the Roman centurion, "I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers." The condition for the exercise of authority is ever that of submission to authority.

At the very beginning of His career Christ had to make His choice between self and God. The significance of the temptation in the wilderness is surely this, that Christ then deliberately chose to walk in God's way, and with His eyes wide open submitted Himself to the yoke of God's holy will. That is, indeed, the key of our Lord's life. *Deus vult* was His watchword. He pleased not Himself. It was His meat to do the Father's will, and to accomplish His work. He shrank from nothing which the will of God brought to Him. When it brought Him to Gethsemane and the cross, He said, "The cup which the Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" And that is the yoke He is commending here to the people, the yoke He had all His life borne Himself.

2. It is not easy at first to lay aside every other yoke and accept the yoke of Christ. The yoke is easy when you have put your neck beneath it; but to bring yourself to that point may involve a wrestle with self that almost tears the heart asunder. The burden is light when you have forced your reluctant shoulders to bear it; but to do that may be the most difficult thing in all the world. There are some things that are easy enough to do, once you have made up your mind to do them; it is making up the mind that is the straining, torturing thing. And easy as may be the burden that Christ imposes, calmly as the soul's experience may go on when once the soul has settled down to the Christian conditions, there remains for all of us the battle with stubbornness and pride, the coercion of the stiff and resisting will, before we pass into the Christian peace. It is a difficult thing to take up the easy yoke. It is a heavy task to make ourselves carry the light burden. And we need not, therefore, distrust the genuineness of our Christward desires because we are conscious of so much difficulty in driving our rebellious natures to the point of Christly submissiveness.

¶ "How hard it is to be a Christian," cried Browning in the opening words of his "Easter Day." To-day some people are trying

to make it more easy. So they are discreetly silent about the yoke, and the cross, and the denying of self, concerning all of which Jesus spoke so plainly—while they make the most of the joy, and peace, and comfort of the Gospel. The experiment does not appear to be very successful. Chivalrous souls would be more drawn by the spirit of adventure in response to a trumpet-call to battle than to listen to these soothing songs of ease. But if it did succeed, what would be the value of a Christianity so one-sided, so enervating, so self-indulgent? In fact, I do not see how you can call it Christianity at all. The ship is stranded at the bar of the harbour. What is to be done to float her? You can throw the cargo overboard; but then the very purpose of her voyage will be destroyed. It will be better to wait till the flood-tide, and then the ship will rise in the deep water and sail out to sea, cargo and all. It is vain to float our Gospel ship by throwing cargo overboard. The only wise course is to take Christ's full message. To have the yoke and the cross as well as the pardon and the peace.[1]

¶ Is there no difference when you are on your bicycle between bicycling with the wind, when you scarcely feel the wind and go smoothly and firmly down the road, and bicycling against the wind? There is all the difference. In one there is peace and rest, and swiftness and progress. In the other it is beating up, beating up this way and that. You could hardly have a simpler and yet a truer illustration of the difference between being borne by the Spirit along the course of the will of God and trying to beat against the will of God and against the action of the Spirit. It is to fling ourselves into the tide of the Spirit—Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness—to yield ourselves to the action of the Spirit, and to pass down the will of God before the wind. That is peace; that is rest. And there is no other in the world.[2]

3. Ease comes by practice. When we have fully surrendered ourselves to Christ, the yoke becomes easy and the burden light. To yield to Christ, to obey His conditions, brings us into harmony with the eternal order of things, and makes us realize this; we know, when once we have yielded and obeyed, that we are in the spiritual position—if one may employ the phrase—where we have all along, although perhaps without understanding it, wanted to be; and they who hear Christ's call and answer to it are sure, so soon as their responsive movement towards the calling Christ is made, that the soul's questions are settled once for all,

[1] W. F. Adeney. [2] Bishop A. F. W. Ingram.

the soul's requirements met and its instinctive, deep-seated capacities filled. It is difficult to force ourselves to the yoke; but once it is taken up, the yoke fits, sits lightly, does not fret or gall. Christ is found to do no violence to the soul. Really to accept Christ's conditions is to find ourselves where we want to be, set going on the true and satisfying line of life. We give ourselves to Christ—and in that surrender we, so to say, receive ourselves back again, made great and free. Christ's whole method and spirit of life, once we comprehend and accept it, comes to us as the one right and natural thing.

¶ We know what a galling bondage an uncongenial service may be; we know, on the other hand, what a genuine, an unalloyed delight that work is which is absolutely congenial. We make most of our children learn some musical instrument or other. But to many a boy the hours he spends at the piano are sheer drudgery. His practice-hour is Egyptian task-work to him. He has no taste or aptitude for music. But watch the man with music in his soul at the piano! Watch a Paderewski play! His hands ripple over the keys in a kind of ecstasy. Playing is not task-work to him, it is a rapturous delight. It is congenial work. When sons are growing up and the time draws near when they must face life for themselves, their parents' great anxiety is to discover what their special aptitudes are, for in the long-run no man can be really happy or useful in his work unless he has some taste and fitness for it. A boy with mechanical aptitudes is unhappy if put to a literary or intellectual calling. A boy with intellectual tastes is wasted if put to mechanical employment. If a man is to be happy and useful he must find a congenial sphere in life. And the law holds good in higher concerns than the choice of a trade or calling. It is valid also in the moral and spiritual realm. If a man is to be at rest and peace, his soul must be in congenial service. And that is why Christ's yoke is easy—the service of God is congenial service.[1]

¶ At the time of the great Civil War in America, the call went round the land for men to take up the cause of their country's freedom. The men responded, and it was noticed that men whose lives had been made a very burden to them by all sorts of trifles, men who were always suffering friction and irritation because little things went wrong, men who, perhaps, could not stand any little trial or trouble without becoming almost unendurable to live with—these were the people who, not groaning and

[1] J. D. Jones.

making a misery of it, but with a certain exultation of the heart, took upon them the great yoke of their country's emancipation, and straightway all the little burdens were forgotten, they became absolutely trivial and insignificant, and the burden that they bore was light.[1]

¶ Matthew Henry characteristically says that Christ's yoke is "lined with love"; and St. Bernard cried in his distant day, "O blessed burden that makes all burdens light! O blessed yoke that bears the bearer up!"

II.

The Lesson.

"Learn of me."

1. We understand now why Jesus adds, "Learn of me." To take His yoke is to be trained in His school. It was a common thing for Jewish teachers to issue such invitations, just as to-day men issue prospectuses. Here, for instance, is a passage from the book of Sirach, written several centuries before the birth of Jesus: "Draw near unto me ye unlearned, and lodge in the house of instruction. Say wherefore are ye lacking in these things and your souls are very thirsty? I opened my mouth and spake. Get her for yourselves without money. Put your neck under the yoke, and let your souls receive instruction. She is hard to find. Behold with your eyes how that I laboured but a little, and found myself much rest." The disciple must sit at his Master's feet, and patiently learn of Him, drinking in His teaching, absorbing His spirit, gradually growing into the knowledge and character that He desires to impart. This is required of the disciple of Christ who would learn His secret of rest.

¶ When He says, "Come unto me, and learn of me," we are not to think merely that we have to learn something; but we have to know that if we learn it in any other way than from Jesus, it is a lost learning.[2]

¶ It must have been at one of the early meetings [with University students at Edinburgh], when he had for text the grand Gospel invitation in the end of the eleventh of Matthew, that Mr. Drummond used an illustration which caught their

[1] C. Silvester Horne. [2] Erskine of Linlathen.

attention and guided some to the discipleship of Christ. "You ask what it is, this coming to Christ. Well, what does Jesus Himself tell you here? He says, 'Learn of me.' Now, you are all learners. You have come to Edinburgh, some of you from the ends of the earth, to learn. And how did you put yourself in the way of learning what is here taught? You went to the University office and wrote your name in a book. You matriculated; and becoming a University student, you went to get from each individual professor what he had to teach. So, with definite purpose to learn of Christ, must you come to Him and surrender yourself to His teaching and guidance." Sometimes thereafter, when a happy worker had to tell of a new addition to the number of Christ's disciples, he would pleasantly say that So-and-so had "matriculated."[1]

2. Jesus gives us a perfect pattern of submission. "I am meek and lowly in heart." Here alone in the New Testament is mention made of the heart of Jesus. He whose yoke we take, whose service we enter, whose lesson we learn, is lowly in heart; His love stoops from heaven to earth; His care is for all who are weary with earth's vain service, all who are down-trodden in the hurry and rush of life. In Him they shall find what their souls need; not freedom from sickness, sorrow, or death, not deliverance from political or social injustice. No; He Himself suffered patiently; He endured these hardships and the agony of loneliness, desertion, and misunderstanding. He gives rest and refreshment to the soul. When meekness enters into the heart and is enthroned therein as a queen, a revolution takes place in that heart. At the gentle swaying of her wand many a Dagon crumbles to the ground. Pride must go, false ambition must go, resentment must go, jealousy must go; all these false gods must go, and take their baggage with them. And when all those have left, the roots of restlessness and worry will be plucked from that heart.

¶ In the meekness and lowliness of Jesus lies great part of His mastery over men; in meekness and lowliness like those of Jesus lies our rest. . . . The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is like the dust from flowers in bloom. It insinuates and instils. The meek man is not without opinions, or a stranger to enterprise. He does not live in an untroubled sphere, but he has no desire to see his

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 300.

opinion imposed on any. Children find out the meek; for meekness is the childhood of the soul. Haughty men are never young, the meek never grow old. Most of us have known some. The young are warmed by them, the middle-aged soothed, the old supported. Meek hearts live for ever: they are the stock of an immortal tree. They inherit lives that live after them, they are spiritual children. David says, "God is meek": Christ says, "I am meek." The Holy Spirit's emblem is a dove. The dove comes when you do not stir it. Ask gently in silent prayer. He came thus to Christ, and will to you when kneeling and broken down. Thou, who art Thyself meek and lowly, take pity and create in us Thy meekness.[1]

3. We must learn humility, because without it there can be no true obedience or service. Humility is the keynote of the Divine music which Jesus came to make in our world. It is because we have lost it that all has become discord. It is the keystone of the arch of the Christian virtues. It is because that is wanting that the whole structure of the Christian character so often crumbles into ruin. We are loth to give meekness that prominent position among the Christian virtues which Christ assigned to it. We often go so far as to put pride in its place, though pride is probably the most hateful of all vices in the sight of God. Without meekness it is impossible to perform any good and acceptable service to our fellow-men, for pride vitiates and stultifies all we do; and it is impossible to love and serve God, for pride banishes us from Him, since it is written: "As for the proud man, he beholdeth him afar off." True humility, therefore, must be ours if we would obtain rest unto our souls.

¶ The man that carries his head high knocks it against a great many lintels which he who stoops escapes. The lightning strikes the oak, not the grass. If you wish to be restless and irritated and irritable all your days, and to provide yourself with something that will always keep you uncomfortable, assert yourself, and be on the look-out for slights, and think yourself better than people estimate you, and be the opposite of meek and humble, and you will find trouble enough.[2]

[1] R. W. Barbour, *Thoughts*, 105, 112.

[2] A. Maclaren, *A Rosary of Christian Graces*, 154.

III.

THE REST.

"Ye shall find rest unto your souls."

1. When we respond to Christ's invitation and come to Him, we enter into the rest of faith. The very act of trust brings tranquillity, even when the person or thing trusted in is human or creatural, and therefore uncertain. For, to roll the responsibility from myself, as it were, upon another, brings repose, and they who lean upon Christ's strong arm do not need to fear, though their own arm be very weak. The rest of faith, when we cease from having to take care of ourselves, when we can cast all the gnawing cares and anxieties that perturb us upon Him, when we can say, "Thou dost undertake for me, and I leave myself in Thy hands," is tranquillity deeper and more real than any other that the heart of man can conceive. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Cast yourself upon Christ, and live in that atmosphere of calm confidence; and though the surface may be tossed by many a storm, the depths will be motionless and quiet, and there will be "peace, subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

¶ Two painters each painted a picture to illustrate his conception of rest. The first chose for his scene a still, lone lake among the far-off mountains. The second threw on his canvas a thundering waterfall, with a fragile birch-tree bending over the foam; at the fork of a branch, almost wet with the cataract's spray, a robin sat on its nest. The first was only STAGNATION; the last was REST. For in Rest there are always two elements—tranquillity and energy; silence and turbulence; creation and destruction; fearlessness and fearfulness. This it was in Christ.[1]

2. This was Christ's own rest. In reading the story of Christ's life you are struck by that wonderful self-possession, that quiet dignity of soul which never forsook Him. There is never anything approaching to the agitation which betokens smaller minds. There is that large equanimity which never forsakes Him even in

[1] Henry Drummond.

the hour of profoundest distress. Look at Him during the quiet years in the home. Though conscious of the high calling which awaited Him He never showed any impatience during those thirty years. Though He knew He should be about His Father's business, He first found it in the little home in which He lived. Watch Him, too, when He moves out into the busy activities of His ministering life; you still find the same quiet self-possession and restfulness of soul. He stands absolutely unmoved amongst those temptations and seductions which were set before Him. So, when the crowd thronged round Him while on His way to the healing of Jairus's daughter, you see His quietness, self-possession, and restfulness of spirit. Even when you come to the final scenes of the agony, there is the same equanimity, for it is equanimity which can detach self from the urgency and the duties of the moment. When you turn to the pages of the evangelists, what is uppermost in the mind surely is this, the thought of the quietness, the dignity, the unrivalled tranquillity, the self-possession, the restfulness of soul which never deserts their Lord and Master. Throughout all, He possessed that restfulness of soul of which He speaks here. And this is the secret which the world has so often longed for. All men are disposed to say at a later stage of their life, "Give us what you will, I do not ask now for joy or happiness; give me the capacity for sweet contentment, give me quietude of soul, give me the power to be at rest."

¶ We can no more leave the path of duty without danger of ruin than a planet could without danger break away from the path of its orbit. The moral law is as binding and beneficent in its action, if duly obeyed, as the physical law. The yoke is a badge, not of servitude, but of liberty; duty and law are not stern and forbidding, but gentle and friendly; they are but two names for the fostering care of God over all His works. Wordsworth, who with clearer insight than all others caught a glimpse of the face of God beneath the veil of Nature, thus addresses Duty:

> Stern Lawgiver! Yet thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As is the smile upon thy face:
> Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
> And fragrance in thy footing treads;

Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live.[1]

3. This strange gift of rest is at once immediate and progressive. "I will give you rest," that is, "on your coming to Me"; and "ye shall find rest," that is, "on your continuance with Me." The experiment of faith is to issue in an experience of rest which pervades every part of life until the whole is under its dominion, and until the peace of God reigns unhindered in the throne-room of the heart. As the tide setting in from the deep rises steadily until every dry inlet and creek along the coast-line is filled with the ocean's fulness, so is the experience of Christ's rest to increase and enlarge in the lives of His people. No man has learned all there is of a language or its literature when he has but mastered the alphabet. And no man finds all that the rest of Christ is who is content with a mere casual acquaintance with the Son of God. For the relationship which is adjusted on our first coming to Him must be strengthened on our side by a constant increase of the area of surrender, answering to increasing light. And it is in this ever-enlarging obedience that rest is increasingly found.

¶ When our surrender is made, the pain of our sacrifice is great in proportion to our former selfishness. It is also harder to bear, or more protracted when there is any looking back. When we have once renounced our self-will and deliberately chosen the Will of God, if we look back we not only expose ourselves to grievous risk, but also we make everything so much harder to accomplish. If we would be brave in the surrender of the will, we must set our faces in the way of the higher life, contemplate the beauty of the graces proposed to us, and deny the former gratifications and appeals of self-love. We shall indeed

[1] A. M. Mackay.

prove that the surrender of our will and the acceptance of God's Will is no pleasing action of the soul; but rather that, again and again, as grace increases so love will be tested. And yet, so perfect is the response of Divine love, that habitual surrender of the will to God leads to great peace in the fact that we have no will but His. Thus St. Catherine of Siena was enabled to make so complete a surrender of her own will that our Lord gave her His Will. She had made her communion with such devotion that she was led to pray "that He would take away from her all comforts and delights of the world that she might take pleasure in none other thing, but only in Him." If we are moved by a like holy desire, we should persevere in the constant surrender of the will; nor let us be discouraged though we have to renew our efforts at ever-increasing cost. New and higher ways of self-surrender will appear, new opportunities of sacrifice will be presented, greater and more interior sufferings will test us, whether our love is equal to really great things; whether we will aspire to the heroism of the Saints in the effort after perfection. "Be ye perfect" is the Divine precept which echoes in the soul inflamed by love.[1]

4. When we give ourselves up to the Father as the Son gave Himself, we shall find not only that our yoke is easy and our burden light, but that they communicate ease and lightness; not only will they not make us weary, but they will give us rest from all other weariness. Let us not waste a moment in asking how this can be; the only way to know that is to take the yoke upon us. That rest is a secret for every heart to know, for never a tongue to tell. Only by having it can we know it. If it seem impossible to take the yoke upon us, let us attempt the impossible, let us lay hold of the yoke, and bow our heads, and try to get our necks under it. If we give our Father the opportunity, He will help and not fail us. He is helping us every moment, when least we think we need His help: when most we think we do, then may we most boldly, as most earnestly we must, cry for it. What or how much His creatures can do or bear God alone understands; but when it seems most impossible to do or bear, we must be most confident that He will neither demand too much nor fail with the vital Creator-help. That help will be there when wanted —that is, the moment it can be help. To be able beforehand to imagine ourselves doing or bearing we have neither claim nor need.

[1] Jesse Brett, *Humility*, 14.

¶ They tell me that on a farm the yoke means service. Cattle are yoked to serve, and to serve better, and to serve more easily. This is a surrender for service, not for idleness. In military usage surrender often means being kept in enforced idleness and under close guard. But this is not like that. It is all upon a much higher plane. Jesus has every man's life planned. It always awes me to recall that simple tremendous fact. With loving, strong thoughtfulness He has thought into each of our lives, and planned it out, in whole, and in detail. He comes to a man and says, "I know you. I have been thinking about you." Then very softly—"I—love—you. I need you, for a plan of Mine. Please let Me have the control of your life and all your power, for My plan." It is a surrender for service. It is *yoked* service. There are two bows or loops to a yoke. A yoke in action has both sides occupied, and as surely as I bow down my head and slip into the bow on one side—I know there is *Somebody else* on the other side. It is yoked living now, yoked fellowship, yoked service. It is not working *for* God now. It is working *with* Him. Jesus never sends anybody ahead alone. He treads down the pathway through every thicket, pushes aside the thorn bushes, and clears the way, and then says with that taking way of His, "Come along with Me. Let us go together, you and I. Yoke up with Me. Let us pull together." And if we will pull steadily along, content to be by His side, and to be hearing His quiet voice, and always to keep His pace, step by step with Him, without regard to seeing results, all will be well, and by and by the best results and the largest will be found to have come.[1]

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Service*, 79.

My Church.

LITERATURE.

Abbott (L.), *Signs of Promise*, 157.
Adeney (W. F.), in *Men of the New Testament*, 109.
Book (W. H.), *The Columbus Tabernacle Sermons*, 142.
Brown (C. R.), *The Young Man's Affairs*, 139.
Burrell (D. J.), *The Spirit of the Age*, 296.
Clow (W. M.), *The Secret of the Lord*, 42.
Dewhurst (F. E.), *The Investment of Truth*, 191.
Goulburn (E. M.), *The Holy Catholic Church*, 1.
Gray (W. H.), *Old Creeds and New Beliefs*, 232.
Greenhough (J. G.), *The Cross in Modern Life*, 105.
Holland (H. S.), *Creed and Character*, 37.
Horton (R. F.), *The Teaching of Jesus*, 125.
Jones (J. C.), *Studies in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, 255.
Neville (W. G.), *Sermons*, 109.
Newman (J. H.), *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*, 263.
Nicoll (W. R.), *The Lamp of Sacrifice*, 113.
Owen (J. W.), *Some Australian Sermons*, 167.
Peabody (F. G.), *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii. 33.
Sanderson (T.), *Unfulfilled Designs*, 141.
Shepherd (A.), *Bible Studies in Living Subjects*, 219.
Stanley (A. P.), *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, 76.
British Congregationalist, March 23, 1911 (W. B. Selbie); Sept. 21, 1911 (J. Warschauer).
Christian World Pulpit, xxxiv. 207 (C. Garrett); lviii. 243 (J. A. Brinkworth).
Churchman's Pulpit: St. Peter, St. James, xv. 36 (C. Hardwick).
Contemporary Review, xcvii. (1910) 165 (G. Whitelock).
Expositor, 2nd Ser., vii. 311 (J. A. Beet).
Homiletic Review, New Ser., xliv. 239 (F. R. Hiel).

My Church.

And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.—Matt. xvi. 18.

Christ had come very nearly to the close of His Galilean ministry. He had been preaching for about a year, and the twelve disciples had been accompanying Him, listening to His preaching, doing a little preaching themselves, and gradually learning the truth which He had come to proclaim. He had taken them apart by themselves for more close individual religious instruction. He pursued the Socratic method. He asked them to what conclusions they had come as the result of what they had seen and heard during this year's companionship with Him. He asked, "Who do men say that I am?" And the Apostles reported various answers: "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Then He said unto them, "But who say ye that I am?" And Peter, who was never slow to speak, answered, perhaps as spokesman for the rest, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To this Christ replied: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

The whole passage from which these words are taken has been a battlefield for centuries between two irreconcilable conceptions of Christianity. Our Lord had put a question to His disciples, and it was no mere casual inquiry suggested by some chance turn in the conversation. It was really an investigation into the foundation of that world-wide kingdom He had come to establish.

I.

The Rock Foundation of the Church.

"Thou art Peter (Petros), and on this rock (petra) I will build my church."

1. The name of Peter is not bestowed here but interpreted. Christ does not say, "Thou shalt be," but "Thou art": and so presupposes the former conferring of the name. Unquestionably, the Apostle is the rock on which the Church is built. The efforts to avoid that conclusion would never have been heard of, but for the Roman Catholic controversy; but they are as unnecessary as unsuccessful. Is it credible that in the course of an address which is wholly occupied with conferring prerogatives on the Apostle a clause should come in which is concerned about an altogether different subject from the "thou" of the preceding and the "thee" of the following clauses, and which yet should take the very name of the Apostle, slightly modified, for that other subject? We do not interpret other books in that fashion. But it was not the "flesh and blood" Peter, but Peter as the recipient and faithful utterer of the Divine inspiration in his confession, who received these privileges. Therefore they are not his exclusive property, but belong to his faith, which grasped and confessed the Divine-human Lord; and wherever that faith is, there are these gifts, which are its results. They are the "natural" consequences of the true faith in Christ in that higher region where the supernatural is the natural. Peter's grasp of Christ's nature wrought upon his character, as pressure does upon sand, and solidified his shifting impetuosity into rocklike firmness. So the same faith will tend to do in any man. It made him the chief instrument in the establishment of the Early Church. On souls steadied and made solid by like faith, and only on such, can Christ build His Church.

What Christ says, then, is not, "On you and your successors in ecclesiastical office I will build My Church"; not, "On what you have said I will build My Church"; but, "On you as a man transformed by the power of an indwelling Christ, on you as the type of a long line of humanity growing broader through the sweep and range of history, humanity transformed and changed

by the indwelling of My own Messianic life, I will build My Church." This is the interpretation of the text afforded by its setting. This is also Peter's own interpretation. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

¶ The change of person "on *this* rock," instead of "upon *thee*," is the natural result of the sudden transition from a direct to a metaphorical address; and is in exact accordance with our Lord's manner on other occasions. He said not "Destroy Me" or "the temple of My body," but "destroy *this* temple" (John ii. 19). The change of gender from *Petros* to *petra* is the natural result of the change from a proper name to the work from which the proper name is derived. The French language alone, of all those into which the original has been translated, has been able entirely to preserve their identity. The Greek *Petros*, which for the sake of the masculine termination was necessarily used to express the name itself, was yet so rarely used in any other sense than a "*stone*" that the exigency of the language required an immediate return to the word *petra*, which, as in Greek generally, so also in the New Testament, is the almost invariable appellation of a "*rock*." To speak of any confession or form of words, however sacred, as a foundation or rock, would be completely at variance with the living representation of the New Testament. It is not any doctrine concerning Christ, but Christ *Himself*, that is spoken of as being in the highest and strictest sense the foundation of the Church (1 Cor. iii. 11), and so whenever the same figure is used to express the lower and earthly instruments of the establishment of God's Kingdom, it is not any teaching or system that is meant, but living human persons. Thus the Apostles are all of them called "foundations" of the Church in Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14; and, by a nearly similar metaphor, Peter, James, and John are called "pillars" (Gal. ii. 9), the faithful Christian a "pillar in the temple of God" (Rev. iii. 12), and Timotheus, by a union of both metaphors, "the pillar and ground" of the "truth in the house of God."[1]

¶ Stier is suggestive upon this point: "The man is Simon

[1] A. P. Stanley, *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, 113.

Bar-jona the sinner: not upon him, therefore, is it to be built; but upon *this Peter* such as grace makes him; upon him because, and in as far as, he certainly corresponds to this name more than the others. Still for this very reason the co-ordinate *stones* and *pillars* are by no means excluded, and even the primacy of Peter rests at bottom only upon this, that he is called to begin the preaching of the Word as first among equals." So wonderfully does the Lord vouchsafe to build up the eternal fabric of the Church out of human stones, Himself indeed the chief corner-stone, and the twelve Apostles the twelve foundations, St. Peter the great basal stone of the fabric, while thereon is built up, as that very St. Peter himself testifies, out of *living stones*, a spiritual house.[1]

2. Jesus builds His Church upon average human nature. Who was this man of whom Jesus said that he was a rock? He was the most unstable and shifting of the disciples, as little like a rock as a man could be. Jesus must have known this; Peter must have known it; and the fishermen with Peter must have known it also. He was quick to act and quick to reject. He was what the modern world calls a "quitter," a man who could not stand the strain of disapproval or suspicion; a man who was more like sand than rock. Yet Jesus takes him just as he is, believes in him when he does not believe in himself, sees his underlying qualities of strength and leadership, and converts him into the rock which He would have him be. It was like the process of nature which tosses the sand up on the shore and then beats upon it and hardens it until it becomes converted into stone; and we call it, by what seems a contradiction in terms, sandstone. So Jesus takes this unstable character and says to it: "Thou shalt be a rock," and by the hard friction and compression of experience Peter becomes that which Jesus saw that he could be.

¶ Mr. Bernard Shaw (who asks not for a new kind of philosophy but for a new kind of man) cannot understand that the thing which is valuable and lovable in our eyes is man—the old beer-drinking, creed-making, fighting, failing, sensual, respectable man. And the things that have been founded on this creature immortally remain; the things that have been founded on the fancy of the Superman have died with the dying civilizations which alone have given them birth. When Christ at a symbolic moment was establishing His great society, He chose for

[1] A. Ritchie, *Spiritual Studies in St. Matthew's Gospel*, ii. 33.

its corner-stone neither the brilliant Paul nor the mystic John, but a shuffler, a snob, a coward—in a word, a man. And upon this rock He has built His Church, and the gates of Hell have not prevailed against it. All the empires and the kingdoms have failed, because of this inherent and continual weakness, that they were founded by strong men and upon strong men. But this one thing, the historic Christian Church, was founded on a weak man, and for that reason it is indestructible. For no chain is stronger than its weakest link.[1]

¶ We are all familiar with the expression "a chip of the old block." The quality of the chip bespeaks a block of like quality. The chip is a pattern or sample of the block. In the same way the evidently durable *petra* calls up the image of a *petros* of like quality, as that which would afford an unrivalled foundation upon which to build. Thus when our Lord to His first utterance, "I also say unto thee, that thou art *Petros*," adds the words, "and upon this *petra* I will build my church," it is like the farmer taking up the sample, and declaring, "With this corn will I sow my field," or the woman viewing the pattern, and saying, "Of this stuff will I have a dress."[2]

3. Although the metaphor here regards Jesus, not as the foundation, but as the Founder of the Church, yet in a real sense He is the Church's "one foundation," and Scripture generally speaks of Him as such. If you would seek a sufficient foundation for the Church, it can be found only in One who can give support and maintenance to all that the Church is; only in One who can uphold from the first and through the ages all that enters into the parts and thought and activities of the Church; only in One who Himself contains within Himself the substance which, when worked out by the power of living spirit, will become the manifold forms of the Church's contents—her faith, her sacraments, her worship, her activities, her many kinds and forms of grace and goodness. And He only is such a One who said "Upon this rock I will build my church." And so St. Paul says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

¶ Our Lord proclaimed Himself the Founder of a world-wide and imperishable Society. He did not propose to act powerfully upon the convictions and the characters of individual men, and then to leave to them, when they believed and felt alike, the

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*, 66.

[2] F. G. Cholmondeley, in *The Expositor*, 2nd Ser., viii. 76.

liberty of voluntarily forming themselves into an association, with a view to reciprocal sympathy and united action. From the first, the formation of a society was not less an essential feature of Christ's plan than was His redemptive action upon single souls. The society was not to be a school of thinkers, nor a self-associated company of enterprising fellow-workers; it was to be a Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, or, as it is also called, the Kingdom of God.[1]

II.

The Structure Built upon the Rock.

"I will build my church."

1. The word "church" was neither new nor doubtful in meaning to Jesus' disciples. It was the rendering they found in that Greek Bible they had in their hands for one of the most sacred and significant terms of the Old Testament. The Greek word *ecclesia* is the translation of the Hebrew expression for "the congregation of the Lord." Peter and his fellow-disciples could not fail to realize that Jesus was forming the little band who had companied with Him into a definite and organized religious community. They were no longer a company of men who formed the *school* of a Master. They were the *church*, the society, the congregation of Christ. That society was seen in those twelve men who looked up with wondering eyes and flushed faces to Him whom they had confessed. It was seen again in the Upper Room at the supper table. It was seen again in Jerusalem as, together with the women, they waited on God in prayer, and the number of the names was about an hundred and twenty. It was seen again when the believers met in the first Council at Jerusalem, and the apostles and elders came together to consider. It was seen also whenever men and women met for prayer and for service to Christ.

¶ Ruskin has pointed out how the New Testament use of the word "church" emphasizes this simple and unecclesiastical meaning of the term. It can be seen to-day where two or three are gathered together in His name. To be gathered together in His name means for some purpose He has ordained which can be

[1] H. P. Liddon, *The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 101.

fulfilled through His Spirit, under a sense of His presence. "*Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia.*" Where Christ is, there is the Church. It is the organ through which the great truths He preached, those of God, of the meaning and worth of His words and life and passion and redemption, are declared. It is the witness to His resurrection, the evangelist of His message, the pillar and ground of His truth, the fold of His flock. Like every other society it must have its officers and its ceremonies. Like every other society it must have its functions and its services. These have been simply and fully described as "the word, sacraments, and prayer." Whatever more men shall plead they may and should add to the form and fashion of the Church of Christ nothing more than this was understood by the men of Christ's own time.[1]

2. The Church, or assembly of God's people, is represented as a house; not a temple so much as a beleaguered fortress, according to the figure frequently used by the prophets immediately before the Captivity, and naturally suggested by the actual position of the palace and Temple of Jerusalem on their impregnable hills. But this assembly or congregation, which up to this time had been understood only of the Jewish people, is here described as being built afresh; "built," according to the significant meaning of that word, which, both in the Old and in the New Testament, always involves the idea of progress, creation, expansion, by Him who here, as so often elsewhere, appropriates to Himself what had up to that time been regarded as the incommunicable attribute of the Lord of Hosts. It is of this fortress, this "spiritual house," to use the phrase in his own Epistle (1 Pet. ii. 5), that Peter is to be the foundation-rock. It was no longer to be reared on the literal rock of Zion, but on a living man, and that man not the high priest of Jerusalem but a despised fisherman of Galilee. He who had stepped forward with his great confession in this crisis had shown that he was indeed well fitted to become the stay and support of a congregation no less holy than that which had been with Moses in the wilderness, or with Solomon in the Temple.

¶ We are to be careful as to where we build, and with what we build. The Eddystone Lighthouse was once demolished because it did not properly rest on the rock; and if we are not built on Christ—His doctrine, merit, fellowship, promise—we must

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 46.

be confounded. Let me be sure that I am morticed into the impregnable Rock! Careful with what we build! Eddystone Lighthouse perished once because it was built of wrong material —constructed of wood, it was burnt. How much often enters into the Christian creed that is not jewel or gold—fancies, speculations, notions, utterly worthless! How much often enters into the Christian life that is superficial, freakish, trivial, inferior, and inharmonious! Strange combinations of the true and the false, the precious and the paltry, the beautiful and the vulgar, the essential and the absurd! Lord, grant me grace to build on the granite—to build on Thee.[1]

3. Christ describes the Church lovingly as "My church." If we read the Gospels carefully we shall see with what strictness of application our Lord used the word "My." He never said, "My house," "My lands," "My books," "My wife," "My child." He said, "My Father," "My friends," "My disciples." When we think of it we shall see that His true possessions were His Father and His Church—"My Father," "My Church."

The Church is the company, now indeed quite innumerable, of disciple-like souls who are for ever and ever learning of Him, some of them, the greater number, beholding His face, and serving Him day and night in His temple; the rest not seeing Him yet, but rejoicing in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In a word, the Church is the faithful souls of every place and name known and unknown to whom His name is unutterably dear and His words are more precious than fine gold, who love Him with a love that is more than human, who trust Him with a trust that is stronger than life or death, whose eager desire is to obey Him and serve Him, and whose fervent prayer for ever and ever is to get His truth made known, His salvation proved, and His name lifted above every name, until at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. Upon all these, wherever they are, the Saviour looks down as with the joy of one who looks upon a noble possession, and He says, "They are My Church; and there is no other."

¶ It is not our Church; it is Christ's Church, first and last and always. We cannot do in it what we please: we must do what Christ pleases. He is its Builder. We may use the term "Builder" of Him very much as we use it of an architect to-day. Jesus Christ is the Architect of the Christian Church, and we are

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

all builders under Him—masons, carpenters, hodmen—and the business of these people, from the foreman of the works right downward, is to carry out the Architect's plan.[1]

¶ A foundation must be hidden and out of sight unto all those that outwardly look upon the house. They cannot perceive it, though every part of the house doth rest upon it. And this hath occasioned many mistakes in the world. An unwise man coming to a great house, seeing the antics [wall decorations] and pictures [figures? pillars?] stand crouching under the windows and sides of the house, may haply think that they bear up the weight of the house, when indeed they are for the most part pargeted [painted] posts. They bear not the house: the house bears them. By their bowing and outward appearance, the man thinks the burden is on them, and supposes it would be an easy thing, at any time, by taking them away, to demolish the house itself. But when he sets himself to work, he finds these things of no value. There is a foundation in the bottom, which bears up the whole, that he thought not of. Men looking upon the Church do find that it is a fair fabric indeed, but cannot imagine how it should stand. A few supporters it seemeth to have in the world, like crouching antics [wall decorations] under the windows, that make some show of under-propping it; here you have a magistrate, there an army or so. Think the men of the world, "Can we but remove these people, the whole would quickly topple to the ground." Yea, so foolish have I been myself, and so void of understanding before the Lord, as to take a view of some goodly appearing props of this building and to think, How shall the house be preserved if these be removed—when lo! suddenly some have been manifested to be held up by the house, and not to hold it up. I say then, Christ, as the foundation of this house, is hidden to the men of this world; they see it not, they believe it not. There is nothing more remote from their apprehension than that Christ should be at the bottom of them and their ways, whom they so much despise.[2]

III.

The Security of the Structure.

"The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

1. The figure of the gates is one of the oldest and most familiar in Eastern life. At the gate of every city its elders sat in judg-

[1] W. B. Selbie, in *The British Congregationalist*, March 23, 1911.
[2] John Owen.

ment and in council, as Lot sat in the gates of Sodom. From the gates of the city there issued forth its armies of conquest. "The gates of Hades" is a picturesque and Oriental metaphor for the counsel and craft and force of evil. By the figure Jesus conjured up to the imagination of His disciples that underworld of spiritual evil from which there issued forth the powers of darkness. From these gates of hell Jesus saw down the centuries of the history of His Church, in which all the wisdom of this world, its cunning and cruelty and foul passion, would assail His society of believing men. He foresaw the long struggle when

> Zion in her anguish
> With Babylon must cope.

He foresaw those eras when the battle would seem to go against His Church. He saw His disciples before the Council. He saw His martyr saints witnessing with their lives when paganism sprung on them like a savage beast roused from its lair. He saw the subtler powers of darkness sapping the faith, corrupting the purities, and leavening the simplicities, of His people's worship, and service. He saw the enemy sowing his tares among the wheat. But He saw His Church, in the power of its moral and spiritual energy, emerging from every conflict with a greater victory. He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied.

2. History has justified this promise. The gates of Hades have not prevailed. The Christian Church, on whose foundation in Himself He began to build with, as it were, but a single stone in His hand, has, beyond all other positive institutions, defied and surmounted destruction. Great changes have taken place since Jesus ventured the promise of this portion of Scripture to a poor fisherman, and threw into the air that challenge against fate. Numerous old customs have decayed. Whole systems of religion and philosophy have passed away. Famous cities have crumbled in the dust, and wild beasts have roamed, and birds of prey have screamed over their ruins. Races of men have been dispersed, or are even now in their last remnants thinly melting into the grave which this earth has for nations as well as for individuals. Yea, the very shores of the seas have begun to shift their places, and the everlasting hills have bowed their heads since Jesus spoke to

Peter. But the gates of hell have not prevailed against His Church. Not only has it survived unhurt, as the promise implies, but it has flourished and increased; and under its various names, and with open doors, it still invites the sons of men at once to the shelter of its walls and through the opening of its aisles into paths of endless advancement.

¶ In the middle of the last century all literary and philosophical people in this country were writing down the Church, saying its last days were come: when bishops like Butler were apologizing for Christianity, and historians like David Hume were predicting that by the end of the century it would be among the dead religions; it was just at that time that the great Evangelical revival of Wesley and Whitefield commenced, which carried a new wave, or rather a new fire, of religious fervour into every corner of the land. Again, towards the close of the century, when the French Encyclopædists, led by Voltaire, were saying that Jesus the Nazarene had at last been blotted out, and that Christian temples would be changed into halls of science—it was at that time that William Carey went out to India, and the great foreign missionary enterprise was renewed, if not commenced, which has carried the sign of the cross, and the light of it, into the darkest parts of the world. And the Church has always been surprising its enemies in that way by its wonderful resurrections, just as Jewish rulers were surprised when they found that the name of Jesus which they had crucified, and buried, and got rid of, was working greater miracles than ever.[1]

¶ We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest of our age, when we say,—that cheerfully recognizing, gratefully appropriating whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved, or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that in one or the other form, it will endure through all time; that as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man, is written, "the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Were the memory of this Faith never so obscured, as, indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most: yet in every pure soul, in every Poet and Wise Man, it finds a new Missionary, a new Martyr, till the great volume of Universal History is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth.[2]

[1] J. G. Greenhough, *The Cross in Modern Life*, 116.

[2] Carlyle, *Miscellanies*, ii. 173 (Essay on Voltaire).

3. The greatest hindrance to the victory of this society of Christ, and the supreme sorrow of all loyal hearts within it, has been the low standard of its Christian character, and the apostasy of those traitor hearts who have sometimes found a place among its leaders. The root of this low level of life, and the source of this treachery, has always been the failure to maintain the test of a personal experience. Wherever Christian teachers sanction membership on the ground of a proper age, a sufficient knowledge, a Christian training, or a due regard for religious observances, unworthy lives and heedless practices abound. So long as the winnowing fan of persecution blew away the chaff there was little but wheat in the garner of God and the society of Christ. When the cleansing fires of a searching poverty, a costly service, and an open outcastness, purged believers' hearts of pride and ambition, Christ's society was the ideal of a godly chivalry. But when the Church grew rich and powerful, and when title and rank became appanages of its leaders, and office in it became a coveted distinction, then this solemn test of a personal touch with God was evaded. Christ's society was no longer a community and brotherhood of pure and lowly men. Whatever rank, or place, or authority any man has held in any church in Christendom, it is a simple certainty that Christ has not welcomed him in at all, if he has had no revelation from God.

¶ Thoreau spoke of men whose pretence to be Christian was ridiculous, for they had no genius for it. Matthew Arnold said of John Wesley that he had "a genius for godliness." But nothing can be more misleading than to use such terms as these. They are a distinct denial of Christ's great truth that God's revelation of grace is made not to the wise and prudent, but to babes. There have been men of a real genius for morality, but there is no such thing as a genius for religion. The most reckless and godless wretch, whose name has been a synonym for coarse and blatant atheism, about whom Thoreau and Matthew Arnold would say that he had a genius for devilry, has become a splendid and glorious saint. Wherever there is a soul there is a genius for godliness. But that soul must have come nakedly and openly under the power of God. Then and not till then does it pass into Christ's society.[1]

¶ If Augustin guessed from this upheaval of his whole frame

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 49.

how close at hand was the heavenly visitation, all he felt at the moment was a great need to weep, and he wanted solitude to weep freely. He went down into the garden. Alypius, feeling uneasy, followed at a distance, and in silence sat down beside him on the bench where he had paused. Augustin did not even notice that his friend was there. His agony of spirit began again. All his faults, all his old stains came once more to his mind, and he grew furious against his cowardly feebleness as he felt how much he still clung to them. Oh, to tear himself free from all these miseries—to finish with them once for all! . . . Suddenly he sprang up. It was as if a gust of the tempest had struck him. He rushed to the end of the garden, flung himself on his knees under a fig-tree, and with his forehead pressed against the earth he burst into tears. Even as the olive-tree at Jerusalem which sheltered the last watch of the Divine Master, the fig-tree of Milan saw fall upon its roots a sweat of blood. Augustin, breathless in the victorious embrace of Grace, panted: "How long, how long? To-morrow and to-morrow? Why not now? Why not this hour make an end of my vileness?"

Now, at this very moment a child's voice from the neighbouring house began repeating in a kind of chant: "Take and read, take and read." Augustin shuddered. What was this refrain? Was it a nursery-rhyme that the little children of the countryside used to sing? He could not recollect it; he had never heard it before. Immediately, as upon a Divine command, he rose to his feet and ran back to the place where Alypius was sitting, for he had left St. Paul's Epistles lying there. He opened the book, and the passage on which his eyes first fell was this: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." The flesh! The sacred text aimed at him directly—at him, Augustin, still so full of lust! This command was the answer from on high.

He put his finger between the leaves, closed the volume. His frenzy had passed away. A great peace was shed upon him—it was all over. With a calm face he told Alypius what had happened, and without lingering he went into his mother's room to tell her also. Monnica was not surprised. It was long now since she had been told, "Where I am, there shalt thou be also." But she gave way to an outburst of joy. Her mission was done. Now she might sing her canticle of thanksgiving and enter into God's peace.[1]

[1] Louis Bertrand, *Saint Augustin* (trans. by V. O'Sullivan), 206.

The Keys of the Kingdom.

LITERATURE.

Abbott (L.), *Signs of Promise*, 175.
Book (W. H.), *The Columbus Tabernacle Sermons*, 71.
Burrell (D. J.), *The Spirit of the Age*, 306.
Clow (W. M.), *The Secret of the Lord*, 57.
Fraser (J.), *Parochial and Other Sermons*, 302.
Howatt (J. R.), *Jesus the Poet*, 151.
Jerdan (C.), *Gospel Milk and Honey*, 54.
Lewis (L. H.), *Petros*, 65.
Norton (J. W.), *Golden Truths*, 326.
Selby (T. G.), *The Imperfect Angel*, 261.
Wright (W. B.), *The World to Come*, 45.
Church of England Pulpit, lxii. 376 (F. R. M. Hitchcock).
Church Family Newspaper, Feb. 17, 1911 (F. S. Webster).

The Keys of the Kingdom.

I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.—Matt. xvi. 19.

When this promise was given the little Galilean company was standing on one of the lower spurs of the Lebanon, amidst the pleasant rush and music of its countless brooks, with the grey walls of the Roman castle at Cæsarea Philippi in the distance. Peter had just made his great confession, and by his swift and far-reaching intuition had established his place as foremost man of the Twelve. It was under these circumstances that this peculiar form of expression was first used by our Lord. After speaking of the supernatural knowledge that Peter had received from the Father, Christ goes on to announce the important relation of Peter, as the first possessor and witness of such knowledge, to the Church of the future. And then He advances a step, and speaks of a future gift of light and power and dominion to Peter which the Apostle should receive from His hand: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

I.

The Keys.

"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Keys are the emblems of authority, and this language was addressed to Peter because of the power that was to be conferred on him. He was to arrange and toil, determine and order, in the affairs of Christ's Kingdom, not, of course, absolutely, but under Christ, for Christ is the Head. Peter's authority was to be real, but none the less derived from and dependent upon Christ's will.

Now, as Peter's power was not to be absolute, so it was not to be solitary. It was to be shared by the other Apostles. That is not brought out in the text, for here Christ is dealing only with His servant who had so grandly confessed Him. But later on Christ conferred on the entire company of the disciples the same wonderful power and privilege as He had conferred on Peter, when He said, not to any Apostle in particular but to the entire Church, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." One outcome of the authority was that Peter, like the others, could bind and unloose, could forbid or enjoin, what should be done in the Kingdom of Christ. Through the Apostle Christ was to express His will. Through him the Master was to carry on and carry out His purposes. What Peter ordered would be what Christ desired. What Peter forbade would be the things Christ disapproved, and herein was the reality of the power, herein the vastness of the privilege, that Christ was to work in and through him, for that is loftier and grander than for any man to devise and determine unaided and unguided of the Spirit of God. And it is in virtue of this real and true guiding Spirit that we have the Epistles of Paul, and Peter, and John, and others developing the doctrine of the cross of Christ, and setting forth the source of and the power of the Christian life.

1. If we refer to another occasion upon which Christ used this metaphor of the keys, we shall find that Christ was accustomed to associate with the expression knowledge and the specific power that comes from knowledge. To the lawyers He said, "Ye took away the key of knowledge." The reference here can only be to the knowledge that unlocks the gates leading into the Kingdom of Heaven. That was Christ's future gift to Peter. Putting this side by side with the fact that Christ has just been speaking of a knowledge of His own person and character that had been given to Peter, what can the knowledge that Christ would by and by give be but the knowledge of the Father, of which He was the one only spring and channel amongst men? It was through that knowledge that Peter was to open the way for men into the Kingdom of Heaven. "To bind" and "to loose" was to teach and to rule in the Kingdom of Heaven, in harmony with the

knowledge received from the Father. We observe that the promise deals more immediately with things, not persons; with truths and duties, not with human souls. The Apostles dealt with souls as all other disciples of Christ deal with them, intermediately, through the truths and precepts on which the salvation of souls turned. The power of the keys, of binding and loosing, was in reality the power of knowing the essential truths of God's character and will.

(1) It is the power of a teacher. Among the Jews, when a scribe was admitted to his office a key was given to him as the symbol of the duties which he was expected to perform. He was set apart to study with diligence the Book of the Law, and to read and explain it to the people. Jesus Christ reproved the Rabbis and Pharisees of His day for having taken away the key of knowledge, and for shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, that is, trying to lock good men out. They knew little of the spirit of the law which they taught, and their teaching produced evil fruits in the lives of their countrymen.

There is a sense in which all who faithfully preach the word of the Kingdom hold the keys. When we say that we have got the key to a difficulty, or that an army holds the key to a position, we mean that, however long it may be before the proof of the power is manifested, yet it is there. So with those who proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus. Their word may be derided, their warnings scorned, their entreaties mocked at; yet as the word they speak is not their own but the word of God, so shall that word loose or bind, shut up or set free. But it is the Lord who does this; man is but His agent for declaring His message. Every command or threat is heard by conscience, but the thing that is declared may be long a-coming. It will come, however. So with every word of the gospel: the truth in Jesus is the key of the Kingdom: the decisive proof we may be long in discovering, but early or late every one must find a barred or an abundant entrance, according as he has given heed to or neglected the word of life.

¶ When Luther opened the long-closed Bible in the Gospels and Epistles, he was bringing forth out of his treasury things new and old. He was binding and loosing the consciences of men. When Andrew Melville, in Scottish history, took King James by

the sleeve as that pedant was arrogating to himself a spiritual power which was his neither by law nor by grace, and called him "God's silly vassal," reminding him that there were two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland, he may have been lacking in courtesy, but he was proving himself a scribe of the Kingdom. When John Brown of Harper's Ferry stooped to kiss the negro child in its slave mother's arms as he passed to his death, men of vision might have seen the keys of the Kingdom at his girdle. All men now realize that in his own rude way he taught the things of Christ to his own generation. Wherever and whenever the Christian Church, through its ministers and people and its inspired saints, shall stand to proclaim some high duty or to renounce some hoary wrong, they shall bind and they shall loose, and they shall fulfil the function of the Church in the Kingdom of God.[1]

(2) Again, we are reminded that knowledge is necessary to life; we believe and then do. The great principle is taught that the morality of Christianity flows directly from its theology, and that whoever, like Peter, grasps firmly the cardinal truth of Christ's nature, and all which flows therefrom, will have his insight so cleared that his judgments on what is permitted or forbidden to a Christian man will correspond with the decisions of heaven, in the measure of his hold upon the truth which underlies all religion and all morality, namely, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." These are gifts to Peter indeed, but only as possessor of that faith, and are much more truly understood as belonging to all who "possess like precious faith" (as Peter says) than as the prerogative of any individual or class.

¶ In a chapter of reminiscences which is given at the end of the second volume of the *Letters of Erskine of Linlathen*, Principal Shairp writes: "Mr. Erskine utterly repudiated the character which Renan's *Vie de Jésus* drew of our Lord, and almost resented the fatuity which could separate with a sharp line the morality of the Gospels from their doctrinal teaching as to Christ Himself. He used to say, 'As you see in many English churches the Apostles' Creed placed on one side of the altar, on the other the Ten Commandments, so Renan would divide as with a knife the moral precepts of the Gospels from their doctrines. Those he would retain, these he would throw away. Can anything be more blind? As well might you expect the stem and leaves of a flower to flourish when you had cut away the root, as to retain the

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 65.

morality of the Gospels when you have discarded its doctrinal basis. Faith in Christ, and God in Christ, is the only root from which true Christian morality can grow.'"[1]

2. The history of St. Peter, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, reveals the facts that the lofty promise contained in the text was fulfilled in three important particulars.

(1) He is first in the first election to the vacant apostolate. He is first in the first great conversion of souls. His word rolls like the storm. It cuts and pierces like the sword. We do not require to have the imagination exalted by the vast gilded letters round the cupola of St. Peter's at Rome. This is truly to hold the keys, and to roll back the doors of the Kingdom!

¶ My mother's death was the second epoch in my father's life; and for a man so self-reliant, so poised upon a centre of his own, it is wonderful the extent of change it made. He went home, preached her funeral sermon, every one in the church in tears, himself outwardly unmoved. But from that time dates an entire, though always deepening, alteration in his manner of preaching, because an entire change in his way of dealing with God's Word. Not that his abiding religious views and convictions were then originated or even altered—I doubt not that from a child he not only knew the Holy Scriptures, but was "wise unto salvation"—but it strengthened and clarified, quickened and gave permanent direction to, his sense of God as revealed in His Word. He took as it were to subsoil ploughing; he got a new and adamantine point to the instrument with which he bored, and with a fresh power—with his whole might, he sunk it right down into the living rock, to the virgin gold. His entire nature had got a shock, and his blood was drawn inwards, his surface was chilled, but fuel was heaped all the more on the inner fires, and his zeal, that τι θερμὸν πρᾶγμα, burned with a new ardour; indeed had he not found an outlet for his pent-up energy, his brain must have given way, and his faculties have either consumed themselves in wild, wasteful splendour and combustion or dwindled into lethargy. . . . From being elegant, rhetorical, and ambitious in his preaching, he became concentrated, urgent, moving (being himself moved), keen, searching, unswerving, authoritative to fierceness, full of the terrors of the Lord, if he could but persuade men. The truth of the words of God had shone out upon him with an immediateness and infinity of meaning and power which made them, though the same words he had looked on from childhood, other and greater and

[1] *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, 1840–1870*, p. 375.

deeper words. He then left the ordinary commentators, and men who write about meanings and flutter around the circumference and corners; he was bent on the centre, on touching with his own fingers, on seeing with his own eyes, the pearl of great price. Then it was that he began to dig into the depths, into the primary and auriferous rock of Scripture, and take nothing at another's hand: then he took up with the word "apprehend"; he had laid hold of the truth,—there it was, with its evidence, in his hand; and every one who knew him must remember well how, in speaking with earnestness of the meaning of a passage, he, in his ardent, hesitating way, looked into the palm of his hand, as if he actually saw there the truth he was going to utter.[1]

(2) But the great promise to Peter is fulfilled in a second way. Spiritual sin would steal into the Church; it would glide in under a haze of profession and pretence, as Milton tells us that Satan passed in mist into Paradise. It is Peter who speaks with such awful power. Simon makes an attempt to buy the gift of God with money, and brands upon his own name for ever its ill-omened connexion with the foul offence (far from obsolete) of buying spiritual offices. Peter's voice pronounces his condemnation. "All men," says the Koran, "are commanded by the saint." All men know, if only by instinct, that this priesthood of goodness has been won at the cross, in blood, the "crimson of which gives a living hue to all form, all history, all life." Let us no longer lose our purchase of this mighty term, through fear of its sacerdotal connotations. Dissociated from the institution, as it has been well pointed out, the true priest makes good his claims to mediatorship in the heart of his fellows, solely by the possession of those spiritual qualities which create and confirm the impression that he is nearer to God than they.

¶ Francis of Assisi is pre-eminently the saint of the Middle Ages. Owing nothing to church or school, he was truly *theodidact*, and if he perhaps did not perceive the revolutionary bearing of his preaching, he at least always refused to be ordained priest. He divined the superiority of the spiritual priesthood. The charm of his life is that, thanks to reliable documents, we find the man behind the wonder worker. We find in him not merely noble actions, we find in him a life in the true meaning of the word; I mean, we feel in him both development and struggle. How mistaken are the annals of the Saints in representing him as

[1] Dr. John Brown, *Horæ Subsecivæ*, ii. 9.

from the very cradle surrounded with aureole and nimbus! As if the finest and most manly of spectacles were not that of the man who conquers his soul hour after hour, fighting against himself, against the suggestions of egoism, idleness, discouragement, then at the moment when he might believe himself victorious, finding in the champions attracted by his ideal those who are destined if not to bring about its complete ruin, at least to give it its most terrible blows. Poor Francis! The last years of his life were indeed a *via dolorosa* as painful as that where his Master sank down under the weight of the cross; for it is still a joy to die for one's ideal, but what bitter pain to look on in advance at the apotheosis of one's body, while seeing one's soul—I would say his thought—misunderstood and frustrated.[1]

(3) But there is exhibited yet another fulfilment to the great promise. Peter is also the first to divine the secret of God, to follow the mind of the Spirit. He climbs rapidly to the highest peak, and is the first herald of the dawn. The old is, no doubt, very dear to him; he clings to all that is devout and venerable with the tenacious loyalty of a true Hebrew churchman. He goes up "into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." He ascends the house-top "to pray at the sixth hour." The services of the Temple and of the synagogue go on upon a parallel line with the first eucharists. But this Hebraic Christianity, or Christian Hebraism, cannot continue indefinitely. There are souls among the Gentiles longing for forgiveness, for rest and purity. They are not to dwell in the shadow, to tarry disappointed in the vestibule for ever. It is for Peter to fling back the doors once again. He receives the vision in the house of Simon, the tanner, by the seaside.

> Far o'er the glowing western main
> His wistful brow was upward raised,
> Where, like an angel's burning train,
> The burnished waters blazed.

And now his part as founder and rock is almost over. The reception of Cornelius is his last great act. The last mention of his name in St. Luke's narrative is in these sentences: "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders

[1] P. Sabatier, *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, p. xv.

came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, *Peter* rose up and said unto them"—his last words are characteristic—"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

II.

The Power of the Keys.

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Although the notion of opening and shutting shades off into that of "binding and loosing," it is obvious that the less familiar expression would not have been substituted for the more familiar without some specific reason, which reason is in this case supplied by the well-known meaning of the words themselves. The figure of "binding and loosing," for "allowing as lawful, or forbidding as unlawful," is so simple and obvious that no language has been wholly without it. Twice besides the expression is used: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18); and "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23). On these occasions the words are spoken to others besides St. Peter, and on each occasion the sense is substantially the same: "So great shall be the authority of your decisions, that, unlike those of the ordinary schools or Rabbis, whatsoever you shall declare lawful shall be held lawful, whatsoever you shall declare unlawful shall be held unlawful, in the highest tribunal in heaven."

1. It is, as it were, the solemn inauguration of the right of the Christian's conscience to judge with a discernment of good and evil, to which up to this time the world had seen no parallel. In that age, when the foundations of all ancient belief were shaken, when acts which up to that time had been regarded as lawful or praiseworthy were now condemned as sinful, or which before had been regarded as sinful were now enjoined as just and holy, it

was no slight comfort to have it declared, by the one authority which all Christians acknowledged as Divine, that there were those living on the earth on whose judgment in these disputed matters the Church might rely with implicit confidence. In the highest sense of all, doubtless, this judgment was exercised by Him alone who taught "as one having authority, and not as the scribes," and who on the Mount of the new law drew the line between His own commandments and what was said by them of old time. In a lower sense it was exercised, and has ever since been exercised, by all those who by their teaching or their lives, by their words or their example, have impressed the world more deeply with a sense of what is Christian holiness and what is Christian liberty. In an intermediate sense, it has been exercised by those whose special gifts or opportunities have made them in a more than ordinary degree the oracles and law-givers of the moral and spiritual society in which they have been placed. Such, above all, were the Apostles. By their own lives and teaching, by their Divinely sanctioned judgments on individual cases (as St. Paul on Elymas or the incestuous Corinthian) or on general principles (as in their Epistles), they have, in a far higher sense than any other human beings, bound and loosed the consciences, remitted and retained the sins, of the whole human race for ever.

The Jewish scribe kept the treasury of knowledge. His keys were his powers of reading and understanding and applying the law of God. He was the expositor of God's word, the interpreter of God's mind, the commentator on God's counsels, the teacher of the truth made known to him by God. He *bound* the things of God—His laws, His ideals of life and duty, His lawful sanctions, His sacred and mystic revelation of Himself—upon men's hearts and consciences. He *loosed* men's minds and wills from any bondage, or any tyranny of unrighteous laws, and he enabled them to refrain from indulging in things forbidden. What the Jewish scribe with the keys of knowledge and truth and duty was to the Law, the Christian Church should be to the Kingdom of God. "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." That describes both Christ's own office as the Master and His disciples as His Church.

¶ Go into an observatory, and watch some astronomer as he is following the transit of a star. His telescope is so adjusted that an ingenious arrangement of clock-work is made to shift it with the transit of the star. His instrument is moving in obedience to the movement of the star in the heavens. But the clock-work does not move the star. The astronomer has made his faultless calculations; the mechanic has adjusted his cranks and pendulums and wheels and springs with unerring nicety, and every movement in the telescope answers to the movement of the star in the far-off heavens. The correspondence rests on knowledge. And so when the things that are bound on earth are bound in heaven. Every legislative counsel and decree and movement in a truly apostolic and inspired Church answers to some counsel and decree and movement in the heavens. But then the power of discerning and forecasting the movements of the Divine will and government rests upon the power of interpreting the Divine character and applying its principles of action, as that character is communicated to us by Jesus Christ.[1]

¶ Over thirty years ago Scotland was overwhelmed by a great commercial disaster through the failure of one of its leading banks. It was a calamity that could not stand alone, and day after day the strongest business houses were compelled to suspend payment. The distress brought upon the shareholders, many of them widows and orphans brought in a single morning to poverty, was so great that a gigantic lottery of six millions sterling was proposed. One half of these millions was to be given to subscribers. The other half was to be given to relieve the distress of those who were impoverished. The object seemed so praiseworthy, and the misery was so widespread and so extreme, that many of the wisest and clearest minds in Scotland gave it their support. Suddenly Principal Rainy, the foremost Christian minister of this land in his day, raised his voice. In a letter full of invincible argument, couched in courteous and appealing terms, he protested against this appeal to the very passions and follies, the greed and the gambling, which had produced the ruin. The scheme was dropped in a day. He had bound and loosed the consciences of men. All Scotland understood, for one moment at least, the true meaning of the power of the keys.[2]

2. The power given by these words perhaps goes further still, and implies, under certain extraordinary conditions, fitness and

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Imperfect Angel*, 266.
[2] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 64.

qualification to pronounce an unerring spiritual judgment upon the soul's relation to God. And this leads us to ask the question, Upon what conditions does this power of opening and closing the Kingdom of Heaven, and of retaining and remitting the sin of men, rest? We observe, in the first case, that nothing whatever was promised to Peter, except so far as he was already the subject of a teaching inspiration, and was to become so in a yet richer degree in future days. He held the keys, and could bind and loose in so far as the Son was revealed to him by the Father and the Father by the Son, and not one iota beyond. He could not open the gates of the Kingdom by any private authority and apart from the possession of these truths. Then we come to the promise of this same power to the whole congregation of the disciples. There is no power of binding and loosing apart from Christ's indwelling presence within the Church. And then we come to the last case. Christ connected the power of absolution with a symbolic act, in which He made the disciples recipients of His own life, and partakers and instruments of the Holy Ghost by that fellowship. But it will be observed that there is no valid retention or remission of sin that can be pronounced to men, except by the lips of which the Holy Ghost is the unceasing breath. Given that condition in the case of either priest or layman, one may safely extend to him the power of absolution.

¶ As the doctor takes the key of his drug-store and selects from the specifics that are arranged around him, he kills or makes alive. His key means a power of absolution. When it is first put into his hand he is instructed with as solemn a responsibility as the Judge who pronounces death-sentences. When he selects this drug, or looks upon that as hopeless to apply under the conditions into which the patient has fallen, he is dealing with questions of life and death. And so Christ in His closing admonitions to the disciples teaches that they are not dealing with speculative truth only. The doctrine they are set forth to disseminate is not, like the curious and trivial questions discussed by some of the Rabbis, a matter that cannot possibly affect the spiritual well-being of a single human soul in the slightest degree. They are not following out questions that have a hypothetical value only. It is not for some idle debate in the groves that they are setting forth in the scanty outfit of couriers. They are commissioned to deal with grave, spiritual destinies. "Whose

soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[1]

¶ We are told that, throughout the strain of the civil war in America, Abraham Lincoln found a true priest in the godly and much-suffering woman who had charge of his children. He, who became more powerful than any monarch of modern times through the reverence of his countrymen for the man he was, tells us how he was sustained in that awful crisis of national calamity and personal sorrow by the prayers in his behalf of this stricken, yet believing woman. She knew God, Lincoln felt, so she became God's priest to Lincoln. He resorted to her for intercession on his behalf—he who would, as one truly remarks, have treated with "courteous and civil incredulity a proffer of sacerdotal good offices from Cardinal Gibbons."[2]

3. Yet the responsibility is always with the man himself. To each soul personally God gives the keys of his own destiny and bids him unlock life's closed doors; puts in his hands the rudder and bids him steer his bark; gives him the tools and bids him model his own character. This is the most solemn fact of all, for this is an undivided and unshared responsibility. I may throw on others the blame for the failure of the State and the sins of the Church; but for my decisions respecting my own life I am alone responsible. In vain the reluctant receiver protests against taking the key of his own life; in vain he endeavours to pass it to some other one; in vain he seeks to avoid the necessity of deciding life's problems and making life's choice. Sometimes he seeks a father-confessor and asks him to take the key and bind and loose his life for him; and the father-confessor may accept the trust. But it is in vain. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Whether the father-confessor sits in a priest's chair, or in a Protestant minister's chair, or in a religious editor's chair, he can take no responsibility; he can give counsel, but that is all. To each soul God has given the keys; each soul must bind and loose for itself.

¶ A father whose wealth is in ships and warehouses and railroads, but who has an acre garden attached to the country homestead, summons his boys one spring, as he is going to Europe, and says to them, "I put this garden in your charge; spend what

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Imperfect Angel*, 268.
[2] A. Shepherd, *Bible Studies in Living Subjects*, 231.

you will; cultivate according to your own best judgment; send the product to the market; and account to me for sales and expenditures when I get home." "But, Father," say the boys, "what shall we sow?" "I cannot tell you; you must judge for yourselves." "Where shall we sell?" "Find out for yourselves." "What prices ought we to get?" "Learn for yourselves." "But, Father, we know nothing about gardening; we shall make dreadful mistakes." "No doubt you will," replies the father, "and you will learn by your mistakes; and it is your learning, not the gardening, I care for." "But, Father, we are afraid we shall bankrupt you." The father laughs and replies, "You cannot bankrupt me, if you try, with a summer's gardening on an acre plot." "But, Father," finally protest the boys, "we are afraid that when you come back and see how poorly we have done you will find fault with us and be sorry that you gave us such a trust." And the father catches up a piece of paper and writes upon it: "Know all men by these presents that I hereby appoint my boys, James and John, my true and lawful attorneys, to do all things that may be necessary in the cultivation and charge of my acre garden, and I hereby ratify and confirm beforehand whatever they may do." And he signs it, hands it to them, and goes his way. So God gives to us, His children, in this summer day out of eternity which we call life, and on this little acre plot of ground out of the universe which we call the world, the responsibility and the liberty involved in the charge of our own destinies, and with this He gives power of attorney promising beforehand to ratify and confirm whatever we do in loyal service to Him and in loyal allegiance to His name and honour.[1]

¶ Whatever may have been the influences which concurred in effecting this fundamental transformation in Dr. Martineau's philosophical system, there can be little doubt that when he preached the striking sermon on "The Christian View of Moral Evil" the process was virtually completed. That discourse gives expression in the most emphatic terms to the doctrine of Ethical Individualism, which forms the keynote of his moral philosophy. "This sense," he says, "of individual accountability—notwithstanding the ingenuity of orthodox divines on the one hand, and necessarian philosophers on the other—is impaired by all reference of the evil that is in us to *any source beyond ourselves*. . . . There is no persuasion more indispensable to this state of mind, and consequently no impression which Christianity more profoundly leaves upon the heart, than that of the *personal origin*

[1] L. Abbott, *Signs of Promise*, 187.

and personal identity of sin, — its individual incommunicable character. . . . Hence it appears impossible to defend the doctrines of Philosophical Necessity—which presents God to us as the author of sin and suffering—from the charge of invading the sense of personal responsibility." [1]

[1] *The Life and Letters of James Martineau*, ii. 271.

The Cost of Discipleship.

LITERATURE.

Armstrong (R. A.), *Memoir and Sermons*, 195.
Bishop (J. W.), *The Christian Year and the Christian Life*, 117.
Black (J.), *The Pilgrim Ship*, 189.
Butler (W. A.), *Sermons*, i. 24.
Gibbon (J. M.), *In the Days of Youth*, 59.
Lawlor (H. J.), *Thoughts on Belief and Life*, 62.
Mackenzie (R.), *The Loom of Providence*, 69.
Macpherson (W. M.), *The Path of Life*, 198.
Matheson (G.), *Searchings in the Silence*, 56.
Moody (C. N.), *Love's Long Campaign*, 114.
Parker (J.), *The City Temple*, ii. 258.
Sampson (E. F.), *Christ Church Sermons*, 265.
Trumbull (H. C.), *Our Misunderstood Bible*, 130.
Vaughan (J.), *Sermons* (Brighton Pulpit), ii. (1862), No. 323.
Vickery (J.), *Ideals of Life*, 295.
Watkinson (W. L.), *The Supreme Conquest*, 158.
Watson (J.), *Respectable Sins*, 83.
Christian World Pulpit, vii. 305 (D. Thomas); xii. 394 (H. W. Beecher); lvii. 219 (C. Gore).
Church of England Pulpit, liii. 163 (J. P. Sandlands).
Church Family Newspaper, April 7, 1911 (W. C. E. Newbolt).

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—Matt. xvi. 24.

THESE words were spoken by our Lord when He first began definitely to prepare the minds of His disciples for the humiliation, and suffering, and death which lay before Him. The conception of a suffering Messiah was so alien to the thought of His time that it became needful to prepare the minds of His immediate followers for receiving the Divine idea of self-sacrifice, which He was to reveal in His sufferings and death. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." One of them, with characteristic impulsiveness, repudiated the idea; and Jesus, reading at once the earthly thoughts which prompted the remonstrance of Peter, laid down the indispensable condition of spiritual life, the Divine law of self-sacrifice: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it."

1. There was a special truth in these words for the disciples to whom they were spoken; and to them they were primarily addressed. No one could become a faithful follower of Jesus without being prepared to renounce everything, without carrying his life itself in his hand. And the first desire of Jesus in speaking these words was undoubtedly to make Peter and the rest of his companions understand clearly the absolute degree of the self-sacrifice which they must make in spirit, if they would be thoroughly associated with the Leader in whom they believed. He was going before them bearing His cross, submitting before-

hand to the ignominy and pain which were to be openly realized; He was thus submitting, not in spite of His Divine nature, but *because* He was the perfect Son of the righteous and loving Father. If His disciples would cherish the high ambition of being His friends and followers; if they would look forward to the joy and the crown with which true sacrifice was to be rewarded —they also must tread in the steps of the Master, they must be content to serve and submit, they must gird themselves to the unreserved offering of *themselves* to God.

2. The Christian life also is one of service, of submission. Men do not sit and sing themselves away to everlasting bliss; the way thither is the way of the yoke. Christ is very frank about this; He allures no man to follow Him by false pretences. When men would follow Garibaldi to the liberty of Italy, he warned them that there would be hunger and thirst and fatigue, battle and wounds and death to be endured. Those who would follow must be willing to bear the yoke. When men would follow Christ, He frankly said, "Take my yoke upon you" —the yoke of service, of self-denial, of submission. "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

¶ When Bernard of Quintavalle, convinced of the rare grace granted by God to Francis, and longing to come under its power, determined to join him, the saint, notwithstanding his joy, gave proof of that sound judgment upon which the commune had learned to draw, by proposing that since the life of renunciation was hard, they must lay the whole matter before the Lord, who would Himself be its judge and their counsellor. So they repaired to St. Nicholas' Church, and, after the office, knelt long in prayer for guidance. The curate of St. Nicholas was their friend, and he consulted the gospel text when their minds were prepared to accept its mandates. The first time he opened it these words met his eyes: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow me." The second time, the very gospel which had lately impelled Francis to preach was on the open page (Luke ix. 1–6), while the third test of Bernard's faith was found to be the great and strenuous commandment: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Bernard bowed his head in

obedience to all three, and leaving the church, he and Francis at once set about selling his houses and possessions, and bestowing the money realized on hospitals, poor monasteries, the neediest townsfolk. Then, having finished this affair, the brothers passed down to the plain, and a new stage in the Franciscan movement was initiated.[1]

There are three things in the text—

I. Self-denial—"Let him deny himself."
II. Cross-bearing—"And take up his cross."
III. Following—"And follow me."

I.

SELF-DENIAL.

"Let him deny himself."

1. "If any man would come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Here Jesus makes the duty of denying self an essential requisite of Christian discipleship. A man cannot be a follower of Jesus unless he denies himself, or, as the Greek term indicates, denies himself utterly. The requirement is not the denial of anything, either little or much, to self, but the utter denial of self—a very important and too often unrecognized difference.

As the term stands in the Greek, the injunction of our Lord to His every disciple, to "deny himself," includes the idea of turning oneself away from oneself, of rejecting self as the desire of self. It suggests the thought of two centres—self and Christ—the one to be denied and the other accepted as an object of attraction and devotedness. Its use in the original seems to say: "If you would turn toward Me, you must turn away from yourself. If you would accept Me as the chief object of desire, you must renounce yourself as such an object. If you would henceforward live in My service, you must at once cease to live for your own pleasure and interest."

It is a very common mistake concerning the nature of self-denial to suppose that it involves a constant thought of self, in order to the entire subjection of self. As a matter of fact, he who

[1] Anna M. Stoddart, *Francis of Assisi*, 95.

lives the truest life of self-denial has very little trouble with himself. Being absorbed in an object of interest outside of himself, he forgets himself; living for something worthier of his devotion, he does not give any worrying thought to that self from which he has turned away in his enthusiastic pursuit of a nobler aim. A soldier is worth little as a soldier until he forgets himself in his interest in his military duties. If he even thinks of prolonging or protecting his life, he is more likely to lose it than if he is absorbed in the effort to do his work manfully as a soldier. An unselfish interest in our fellows causes us to forget ourselves in our loving thought of others. An unselfish interest in our Friend of friends takes us away from ourselves, and fills our mind with a simple purpose of pleasing and serving Him. A life of self-denial is not a life of conflict with self; it is rather a life turned away from self in utter self-forgetfulness.

¶ Self-denial is not an outward act, but an inward turning of our being. As the steamship is turned about by the rudder, which is swung by the means of a wheel, so there is within our being a rudder, or whatever you may call it, which is turned by a small wheel, and as we turn the entire craft either leeward or windward, we deny either self or God. In its deepest sense we *always* deny either the one or the other. When we stand well we deny *self*; in all other cases we deny *God*. And the internal wheel by which we turn the entire craft of our ego is our *intention*. The rudder determines the course of the ship; not its rigging and cargo, nor the character of the crew, but its *direction*, the destination of the voyage, its final haven. Hence, when we see our craft steering away from God, we swing the rudder the other way and compel it to run toward God.[1]

2. We have often to deny ourselves in matters that may be in themselves allowable. If they tend in our case to withdraw our hearts from Christ, we must be willing to give them up. Being innocent in themselves, we might be at liberty to choose them or not as we liked, but we have to think of the discipline and maturity of our Christian character, and in regard to this such voluntary sacrifices are in the sight of God of great price, moulding us as they do into a loving and wide embracing obedience to Him. Again and again we may have to deny ourselves

[1] A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 505.

things that seem fitted for adding to our enjoyment, but when we think how Christ denied Himself the most ordinary comforts, not seeking to be ministered unto, but to minister, and giving His life a ransom for us, shall we for a moment hesitate to drink of His spirit that we may do likewise? Very anxiously have we to remember that there is no Christian self-denial in anything that is done merely as self-denial—that all true self-sacrifice is unconscious of itself, strives not to think of itself, but longs simply to please Christ and to do His will and work, without reckoning the cost or trial.

¶ It is said that prior to the rise of Christianity not one of the Western languages had any word for self-denial. The austere moralists of India, indeed, had long since taught the sacrifice of inclination to lofty ideals of duty. But Greece and Rome, nay, even Israel, had not contemplated self-denial as in itself essential to virtuous or devout character; and so they had coined no word for it. But when one by one the Western nations were subdued by the spiritual weapons sharpened in the armoury of Christ, the idea and the word "self-denial" quickly came to the front in preaching and in practice. Nor will any student of the Gospels deny that this is quite a characteristic and typical utterance of Jesus: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."[1]

(1) We are constantly tempted to self-indulgence, to do simply what is easy and pleasant to us, agreeable to our tastes, inclinations, and habits, and leave others to do or leave undone altogether the things that are not according to our taste or that require from us any care or effort or sacrifice. All analogy, and all reason, and all Scripture teach us that we must not consult our own ease and pleasure, that we must not make a kind of pastime of religious service, that we must not be earnest and self-denying in our ordinary calling, and then come to Christ's work as an entertainment for our leisure hours, just playing with the great cause of God. We must not do that; we must work if we would have God to work with us. It is when we do our part that we have any right at all to expect that God will do His part; it is when we do our very best—and we cannot do our very best without much thought, and much prayer, and much effort; without facing difficulties, without strain, without doing some hard things, some

[1] R. C. Armstrong, *Memoir and Sermons*, 195.

painful things. We cannot do our best without all this, and it is when we do our best that we can expect God to do the most.

¶ You have all, I dare say, seen lightning conductors put up on buildings in London; and perhaps you wondered why they were put up. Well the reason is this: the lightning is on the look out for an *easy* way to come down to the earth; it finds it very hard to go through the air. That is the reason why we hear the thunder: it is the noise the lightning makes because it has to come through the air so quickly. And the air tries to stop it coming at all. If it could get on to anything—on to the spire of this church, for example—and slide down, it would be a very easy way of getting along. But it wouldn't be a good thing for the spire; and so they put up lightning conductors—rods right up into the air—so that if the lightning is coming anywhere near, it may get on to the rod and so slip right down into the earth, without doing any harm to the church. For it is always looking out for the *easiest way down.*[1]

(2) Self-seeking is another form of temptation that we must guard against. We are tempted to serve ourselves in God's service, to seek for our own ends when we are professedly and really engaged in His work. Sometimes the selfish end is indirectly sought by us, as when it is the glory, honour, power, and triumph of our party or sect or denomination that we labour for. Sometimes the selfish end is directly before us, as when it is our own influence, or position, or honour, or praise that we seek after. The love of man's approbation is natural to us, and it is quite legitimate that we should seek it, and that we should appreciate it; but how very apt it is to degenerate into downright selfishness, and how very often we are tempted in connexion with God's own work to seek chiefly, to seek unduly, our own selfish ends.

¶ You remember that wonderful parable in the *Peer Gynt* of Ibsen. The worn-out wanderer, grown hoary in selfishness, a past-master in self-seeking, in a rare moment of reflection takes an onion in his hand, and begins to strip it, scale by scale, and the fancy takes him that each scale or flake or lobe or fold represents some experience of his past, some relation in which he has stood to others in the long and chequered experience of life. This one is Peer Gynt tossed "in the jolly-boat after the wreck." This is Peer Gynt a steerage passenger sailing westward over the Atlantic. This is Peer Gynt the merchant, this Peer Gynt as he

[1] J. M. Gibbon, *In the Days of Youth*, 60.

played the prophet. What a host of parts he has played! What a host of folds lie around the central core or kernel of the onion! When he comes to the actual centre, that will stand for Peer Gynt himself, his inner self, apart from all the parts he has played, apart from all the relations to others he has held. And he strips and strips, smaller and smaller are the onion-flakes as he nears the centre. What will the centre be? And in his impatience he tears half a dozen away at once.

> There seem a terrible lot of flakes,
> To get to the core what a time it takes!
> Yes, gramercy, it does, one divides and divides;
> And there *is* no kernel: it's *all* outsides!

That is the parable as the great Scandinavian dramatist has written it. And it is a parable which may be variously applied. Strip away from your life, your soul, every relation in which you stand to other lives, other souls, than your own. You may think thereby to reach at last your own very life or soul; but you will find that there is no self there. You live only in your relations to others than yourself. Annihilate these and you are yourself annihilated.[1]

II.

Cross-Bearing.

"And take up his cross."

1. Cross-bearing is usually regarded as the bearing of burdens, or the enduring of trials in Christ's service, or for Christ's sake. It is impossible to give ourselves up to Christ without suffering some loss or trouble. In early days the consequence might be martyrdom; in our own day it always involves some sacrifice. Now, the cross which the Christian has to bear is not inevitable trouble, such as poverty, sickness, or the loss of friends by death. These things would have been in our lot if we had not been Christians. They are our burdens, our thorns in the flesh. They are sent to us, not taken by us. But the cross is something additional. This is taken up voluntarily; it is in our power to refuse to touch it. We bear it, not because we cannot escape, but because it is a consequence of our following Christ; and the good

[1] R. A. Armstrong, *Memoir and Sermons*, 223.

of bearing it is that we cannot otherwise closely follow Him. He, then, is the true Christian who will bear any cross and endure any hardship that is involved in loyally following his Lord and Master.

When Jesus found His disciples expectant of honours in His service as the Messiah, and longing for places nearest Him when He should be uplifted in His Kingdom, He told them that they little knew what they were asking. His first uplifting was to be on a cross. Would they be willing to share that experience with Him? "Ye know not what ye ask," He said. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?" It costs something, He suggested, to be My follower. A man who enlists in My service must do so with a halter round his neck. If he cares more for his life than for Me, he is unfitted to be one of My disciples. "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not [in comparison with me] his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

¶ Tertullian, speaking to us out of the second century, tells us how the Christians of his day were wont to carry about with them everywhere the sign of the cross, at every step, at every movement, sealing themselves with it. It is now honoured and consecrated; our very churches are built in its shape and ornamented with its figure. But then, to those poor Galileans, who had left all to follow Christ, who dimly dreamed of kingliness and victor pomp, of thrones on the right and thrones on the left, and the fulfilment of patriotic dreams—taking up the cross, it was a thing strange and abhorrent, and contrary to their religious convictions, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on the tree."[1]

¶ The idea of these words, says Ruskin, "has been *exactly* reversed by modern Protestantism, which sees in the Cross, not a furca to which it is to be nailed; but a raft on which it, and all its valuable properties, are to be floated into Paradise." We need but superficial knowledge of current ways of speaking and writing among some religious people to know that there is much that goes a good way to excuse or to justify this very severe criticism.[2]

2. Each has his particular cross to bear. This we have each to discover for ourselves, and bear as we follow Him. Never are we

[1] Canon Newbolt. [2] E. F. Sampson, *Christ Church Sermons*, 265.

to invent crosses for ourselves, and most anxiously are we to take heed that we do not make them for others, for this would indeed be to sin against God, and to bring continued misery on those beside us. Our own cross is close at hand, and we are to see rising high above it that awful yet most blessed and now vacant cross on which the Son of God suffered that He might win us back to the Father. We think how much easier it would be for us, and how much more devout and vigorous a Christian life we should lead, if we could but "change" our own cross for some other one that we imagine we could readily name, thus wishing even our trials to be bent to our own self-will, and suited to what we think for our comfort. We think that we can judge of the crosses which others have to bear, and that ours is often so much heavier than theirs. We may even magnify our own cross until it almost shuts out of view that awe-inspiring cross on which our Saviour offered Himself unto death. We may have sore trial from some beside us, owing to our "choosing that good part" which He sets before us, and we may have daily to bear this cross, which in His wise permission He allows to be laid upon us, although we feel that by only a little change in their disposition they themselves would be blessed, and all life made different to us.

¶ There is a poem called *The Changed Cross.* It represents a weary one who thought that her cross was surely heavier than those of others whom she saw about her, and wished that she might choose another instead of her own. She slept, and in her dream she was led to a place where many crosses lay, crosses of divers shapes and sizes. There was a little one most beauteous to behold, set in jewels and gold. "Ah, this I can wear with comfort," she said. So she took it up, but her weak form shook beneath it. The jewels and the gold were beautiful, but they were far too heavy for her. Next she saw a lovely cross with fair flowers entwined around its sculptured form. Surely that was the one for her. She lifted it, but beneath the flowers were piercing thorns which tore her flesh. At last, as she went on, she came to a plain cross, without jewels, without carving, with only a few words of love inscribed upon it. This she took up, and it proved the best of all, the easiest to be borne. And as she looked upon it, bathed in the radiance that fell from heaven, she recognized her own old cross. She had found it again, and it was the best of all and lightest for her.

God knows best what cross we need to bear. We do not know how heavy other people's crosses are. We envy some one who is rich; his is a golden cross set with jewels. But we do not know how heavy it is. Here is another whose life seems very lovely. She bears a cross twined with flowers. But we do not know what sharp thorns are hidden beneath the flowers. If we could try all the other crosses that we think lighter than ours, we should at last find that not one of them suited us so well as our own.[1]

III.

Following the Master.

"And follow me."

1. Christ pictures Himself here, not as the Redeemer, but as the Leader and Pattern. It was a great event for the world when there was born into it the Perfect Man. Formerly the children of men were aware that they fell short of the perfection that was in God; but they did not suspect that one born of woman could actually attain such holiness. Jesus disclosed what man could be and do.

¶ Mechanics are well aware that the engines on which they spend their powers are far from perfect. But, if some day a machine immensely superior to any that had been produced were devised and constructed by one of themselves, the whole trade would at once undergo a revolution. Employers, designers, draughtsmen, moulders, finishers, fitters, the whole population of the place, would vie with one another in their efforts to equal or surpass the achievement. If, perhaps, like ignorant Russian peasants, they broke the splendid instrument, or if they put it into a glass case as a mere curiosity, yet, after a while, a wiser counsel would prevail. Our great Fellow-workman produced a matchless work; and although for a time His jealous comrades endeavoured to crush it and to suppress the very mention of it, yet, in the end, they began to copy it. The life of Jesus, if it had been an example and nothing more, must certainly have left its mark on the customs of the world.[2]

2. It has been suggested that this phrase, though authentic, may perhaps be misplaced as we have it here in Matthew, and may

[1] J. R. Miller, *Glimpses Through Life's Windows*, 31.
[2] C. N. Moody, *Love's Long Campaign*, 255.

refer to an incident of that dolorous procession in which the Master—Himself for a little while mastered by His foes—was struggling towards the appointed place of tragedy with the huge, rough cross upon His shoulder, ere some flickering of pity on the part of His guards impressed the more muscular Simon of Cyrene to bear the instrument of death along the road. We are invited to behold Jesus with gentle fortitude struggling to bear up under the cruel load, and even then, while the weight of the cross is pressing on His worn and sensitive frame, uttering the precept which had in that moment illustration so terrible: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The disciple was to be as his Master, the servant was to be as his Lord; but the Master was to be a crucified Master; the Lord was to be not merely nailed to the tree, He was to *bear* His cross to the place of execution. And which of them all could have foreseen that awful end? Which of them could have guessed that the degrading punishment, reserved for the basest criminals, would have been assigned to the pure and sinless Jesus? Which of them could have thought that against this humble working-man Prophet the power of Rome would accomplish that which His own nation could not do? Which of them who had believed it possible that He would die upon the cross could have realized that, faint and weary with suffering, He Himself would bear His cross on the road to Calvary, till He could bear it no longer?

¶ Last night I had another mother's meeting for the mothers of the Free Kindergarten. This time I gave a magic-lantern show. I was the showman. The poor, ignorant women sat there bewildered; they had never seen a piano, and many of them had never been close to a foreigner before. I showed them about a hundred slides, explained through an interpreter until I was hoarse, gesticulated and orated to no purpose. They remained silent, stolid. By and by there was a stir, heads were raised and necks craned. A sudden interest swept over the room. I followed their gaze, and saw on the sheet the picture of Christ toiling up the mountain under the burden of the cross. The story was new and strange to them, but the fact was as old as life itself. At last they had found something that touched their own lives and brought the quick tears of sympathy to their eyes.[1]

[1] *The Lady of the Decoration*, 107.

3. Christ appeals to the will. "If a man *wills* to come after me." The cross must be taken up consciously, deliberately, sympathetically. The sacrifice we see in nature is unconscious. When the outer row of petals is sacrificed to the welfare of the guelder rose, the petals are unaware of their immolation; when the bracts wither which have cradled the young leaves of the tree, they perish without any sense of martyrdom. In all their sacrificial work the ant and wasp obey blind impulse. It is often little better in society. We suffer and die for others without realizing the fact. The thought of the genius, the statesman, the physician, and the nurse is often almost entirely self-regarding; they really suffer for the commonwealth without either consciousness or intention. The superior civilization also suffers for the inferior unsympathetically. The bee is a self-centred creature; when it visits a flower it does not think of adorning the plant, of filling the air with sweetness, of delighting human eyes; it thinks only of getting a living, of enjoying itself; yet all the while, unknown to itself, it conveys the pollen which secures the perfection and perpetuity of a thousand flowers. So the European visiting India, Africa, or China does not always realize the larger mission he is fulfilling—advancing civilization by sacrifice. The scientist explores strange lands for knowledge, the soldier for glory, the trader for gold, the emigrant for bread; and yet, all unwittingly, above and beyond their immediate purpose, they impart to the strange regions they penetrate the ideas and qualities of a higher civilization.

In Christ the principle of self-denial became conscious, voluntary, and delightful. He entered into the work of redemption with clearest knowledge, entire sympathy, absolute willingness, and overflowing love. From all His doing and suffering for our salvation come freedom, readiness, and joyfulness. His true disciples share His spirit of intelligent self-sacrifice: consciously, willingly, lovingly, they serve the world and one another. Self-immolation, which is unconscious in the brute, which dimly awakes to the knowledge of itself in reflective humanity, realizes itself lucidly and joyously in the light, love, and liberty of Christ. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "I delight to do thy will, O my God." Such was the spirit and language of the Master in the hour of Gethsemane, in the presence of Calvary.

The disciple must not rest until he attains something of the same conscious surrender and joy.

¶ Phillips Brooks reminds us that the sacrifice of old was offered to the sound of the trumpets with joy, and there ought to be a sort of joy—a real joy—about self-sacrifice in bearing the cross. The pictures of our Lord on the cross, the earliest representations, were not like later ones; they were of a victorious figure in the prime of life, with no nails through His hands and feet, with an upright head, and a look of joyful self-sacrifice. And that is what we must aim at: we must bear the cross joyfully; "take up" the cross—it makes all the difference—lying down under it is one thing, taking it up is another. Take it up bravely, joyfully, cheerfully, and you will find the cross comparatively easy to bear.[1]

> But if Himself He come to thee, and stand
> Beside thee, gazing down on thee with eyes
> That smile and suffer, that will smite thy heart,
> With their own pity, to a passionate peace;
> And reach to thee Himself the Holy Cup
> (With all its wreathen stems of passion-flowers
> And quivering sparkles of the ruby stars),
> Pallid and royal, saying, "Drink with Me,"
> Wilt thou refuse? Nay, not for Paradise![2]

4. Discipleship demands perseverance. "Let him follow me." There is no discharge in this service. It is a lifelong compact. The disciple must follow the Master to the last limit of self-denial and cross-bearing. But the Master lives to help us to be and to do what He shows in His own life is the highest of all goodness and nobleness. So near does He keep to us in His indwelling Presence that He wishes to strengthen us to "walk even as he walked" (1 John ii. 6). We are to feel that though we cannot see Him with our bodily eyes, yet there is no such living Power in the universe as He is; and as we continue to ponder His life and sufferings we shall seem to see Him standing out before our hearts "full of grace and truth," and shall become gradually transformed into His likeness so as to be fitted for living with Him through eternity in His unveiled vision, and for engaging in His sinless service.

[1] A. F. W. Ingram, *Joy in God*, 178.
[2] H. E. Hamilton King.

¶ It is easy to take up one's cross and *stand*; easier still to fold it in the arms and lie down; but to carry it about—that is the hard thing. All pain shuns locomotion. It is adverse to collision, adverse to contact, adverse to movement. It craves to nurse its own bitterness; it longs to be alone. Its burden is never so heavy as when the bell rings for daily toil. The waters of Marah seek repose. If I could only *rest* under my cloud I might endure; but the command is too much for me—"Go, work to-day in my vineyard." If I could go without my cross, it would be something; but I cannot. I can no more escape from it than I can escape my own shadow. It clings to me with that attraction which repulsion sometimes gives. It says, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge."[1]

¶ The followers of Christ are not as Frederick the Great, who in the midst of the Seven Years' War wrote thus: "Happy the moment when I took to training myself in philosophy! There is nothing else that can sustain the soul in a situation like mine." This same Frederick, three years later, wrote that it was hard for man to bear what he endured: "My philosophy is worn out by suffering," he confessed; "I am no saint, like those of whom we read in the legends; and I will own that I should die content if only I could first inflict a portion of the misery which I endure." But Charity never faileth. When Christians grow weary of their efforts, when they are tempted to give up their Christian service because of discouragements in the work, or because of rebuffs and unkindness from their fellow-workers, they remember what sort of Captain they follow, and what sort of strength has been vouchsafed to them.[2]

¶ Drawing his sword, Pizarro traced a line with it on the sand from east to west. Then, turning towards the south, "Friends and comrades!" he said, "on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru with its riches; here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go to the south." So saying he stepped across the line. He was followed by the brave pilot Ruiz; next by Pedro de Candia, a cavalier, born, as his name imports, in one of the isles of Greece. Eleven others successively crossed the line, thus intimating their willingness to abide the fortunes of their leader, for good or for evil. Fame, to quote the enthusiastic language

[1] G. Matheson, *Searchings in the Silence*, 56.

[2] C. N. Moody, *Love's Long Campaign*, 266.

of an ancient chronicler, has commemorated the names of this little band, "who thus, in the face of difficulties unexampled in history, with death rather than riches for their reward, preferred it all to abandoning their honour, and stood firm by their leader as an example of loyalty to future ages."[1]

[1] W. H. Prescott, *The Conquest of Peru*, bk. ii. chap. iv.

The Transfiguration.

LITERATURE.

Bruce (A. B.), *The Training of the Twelve*, 191.
Campbell (W. M.), *Foot-Prints of Christ*, 182.
Curling (E.), *The Transfiguration*, 1.
Deshon (G.), *Sermons for the Ecclesiastical Year*, 138.
Gray (W. A.), *The Shadow of the Hand*, 217.
Gregg (D.), *Our Best Moods*, 73.
Gunsaulus (F. W.), *The Transfiguration of Christ*, 93.
Jeffrey (R. T.), *Visits to Calvary*, 89.
Jones (J. D.), *The Gospel of Grace*, 189.
Kingsley (C.), *Village, Town, and Country Sermons*, 207.
Nixon (W.), *Christ All and in All*, 246.
Ritchie (D. L.), *Peace the Umpire*, 146.
Vernon (E. T.), *The Holy Mount*, 13.
Waugh (T.), *Mount and Multitude*, 117.
Wolston (W. T. P.), *Night Scenes of Scripture*, 46.
Christian Age, xlii. 290 (F. G. McKeever).
Christian World Pulpit, liv. 182 (R. Thomas); lv. 32 (H. S. Holland); lix. 364 (G. C. Morgan); lxxii. 154 (G. A. J. Ross); lxxvi. 85 (R. G. Parsons).

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.—Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

1. VERY little is said in Scripture concerning the glory and majesty of Christ. A stranger reading the Bible, especially the New Testament, would be impressed far more with the majesty of the Messiah's character, and the glory of His moral qualities, than with anything else. This, undoubtedly, was part of the Divine plan; for the search of men was rather for tokens of material glory than for signs of moral excellence. His coming was principally for the display of the latter, and such signs as might have appealed to the desire of the men whose only conception of glory had come to be that of manifested splendour were denied. The word of the prophet spoken in another connexion had a supreme fulfilment in the Person of Jesus, "There was the hiding of his power." Consequently, that which arrests one in the study of the life of Christ is not outward magnificence, not pageantry or pomp, but something more wonderful, and without which mere outward pageantry and pomp would be nothing worth, even His moral glory. It is the beauty of His character that lays hold upon the inmost spirit, and commands its admiration. To see the Christ in the glories of His character is to lie prostrate before Him in adoration.

2. Yet, while the glory of His power is hidden, and the radiant splendours of His person are veiled, occasionally during His sojourn upon the earth they flashed into prominence. Here upon the mount, before the eyes of the disciples, there flamed forth the magnificence and the majesty of Him who, in order that the weakest and most trembling might hold intercourse with Him, had veiled these splendours behind the human.

¶ To any one who remembers who Jesus Christ is, and what He has been and will be to men, no incident of His life is more credible. In all likelihood Jesus was often transfigured in His nights of lonely prayer, although there were no eyes to see Him. No experience set down in the Gospels more entirely becomes the Lord of glory. To one who walked with God and spoke face to face with Him as a child to a father, round whom God's angels continually hovered, on whom the thoughts of all God's saints were set, it is only natural that the fashion of His face should alter, His raiment become as white as snow, and men of God commune with Him.[1]

Let us look at—

I. The Setting of the Transfiguration.
II. Its Significance.
III. Its Practical Suggestions.

I.

The Setting of the Transfiguration.

1. "After six days,"—or, as Luke in less definite language says, "About eight days after these sayings,"—"he bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." The point of time at which the Transfiguration occurred is given by all the three Synoptists, and what they tell us is that at a definite point of time in the progress of His public ministry the Lord meditated deeply upon His coming death, and sought to familiarize His disciples with the idea of His atoning death, and to get some sympathy from them in regard to the idea of that death. When He broke the news of it to them first, Peter resisted the idea, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee," and with pain and distress Jesus saw that Peter was at this time out of sympathy with the idea of His suffering for him. Six days passed. We do not know how these six days were filled up. It may be that they were filled up by patient conversation between our Lord and His disciples as to the place which this atoning death of His should occupy in the whole scheme of God's dealings with men. It may be that He set forth to them the relation of the previous efforts of God for men, symbolized by the life-work of Moses and Elijah.

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 167.

For all we know, they may have had this work of Moses and Elijah fully in their minds during that week. On the other hand, it may have been a week of absolute silence between our Lord and His disciples, when our Lord was, so to say, alienated from His very own, because they could not understand. We read of His marvelling, being astonished at their incapacity to sympathize with this idea of His death. In any case, it was certainly for relief, for sympathy, for reassurance, and for reconsecration of Himself to the atoning work which He was going out to do, it was for these ends that the Lord Jesus went up to this hill to hold fellowship with His Father.

2. Who were His companions in that mysterious hour? At the foot of whatever peak of Hermon He ascended, He left nine of the Twelve in waiting. There, unattended by any save the chosen three, he took His twilight way up the steep. Peter, James, and John, "the three most receptive of Him and most representative of His Church," who had stood with Him in the solemn presence of death in the house of Jairus, who will be with Him in the sorrows of Gethsemane, would Jesus have with Him amid the glories of the Transfiguration. Peter must be there, for Peter will hereafter stand in many a place where only the recollection of the voice from the cloud will strengthen his wavering courage. When the demon of fear would possess his soul, or the spirit of impetuosity thwart the Master's purposes; when he would stand up to press home upon the consciences of his fellow-countrymen the claims of his crucified Lord, or resist the persecutions of some of them, or rebuke avarice, shame, and hypocrisy; when he must needs withstand fanaticism in the Church, comfort believers in trial, enforce their practical duties, warn them against temptation or remove their doubts, he will need the experience of that hallowed night when he was an "eye-witness" of his Lord's majesty. James must be there, for the recollection of those scenes will cool his intolerant spirit, temper his ambition, comfort him in Gethsemane, give perseverance in prayer, and nerve his faith as he lays his head upon Herod's block. John must be there, for Jesus, like all mankind, must needs have near Him in His most sacred moments the one nearest His heart. Love will be strengthened by conviction, and these together will stay John's

hasty flight from the garden, enable him to brook the frowns of the Sanhedrin, strengthen his heart that it may not break under the shadow of the cross, and give clearness of vision to recognize his risen Lord as His voice descends from the opening heavens into the quarries of Patmos; and when, an old man, he shall sit down pen in hand to tell the world that Jesus was Divine, then he will remember, "we beheld his glory."

3. "He bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." It is not to be supposed that a mountain was absolutely necessary for such an event as the Transfiguration, but it is to be conceded that no other place could have been equally appropriate. The voice from heaven had been heard by the Jordan, at the Baptism; an angel had appeared to Zacharias in the Temple; but neither in the Temple with all its sacred associations, nor by the Jordan, the historic river of the nation, would a spot have been found more appropriate for the occasion than that which was chosen, "a high mountain." Our Lord, apparently, was at home among the everlasting hills; they were to Him a mighty staircase that reached to the throne of God. Never did the tempter make a greater mistake than when he supposed he could lay a snare for Jesus on the top of an exceeding high mountain. There the Saviour was more invulnerable than anywhere else on earth. Among the hills Jesus triumphed over the tempter; among them He made known the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven to men; there He sought communion with God; and there He was transfigured.

¶ Several times the writer has climbed to the loftiest peak of one of the grandest of our Scottish mountains, on each occasion accompanied by a different companion, and always without exception his companion has exclaimed, after some minutes of silence on the summit, Let us sing a psalm of praise. The writer's own feeling was rather, Let us pray, or, Let us speak, the consciousness of the Divine presence being stronger than ever elsewhere experienced. Was this feeling shared by our Lord? Probably it was. He is found so frequently up the mountain. And it is clear that His desire was not merely to get away from the world and its disturbing influence, but to get near to the Father. Amidst the grand majestic surroundings of nature, He found Himself near God, and all night, with the silent stars overhead, He held communion with the Father.[1]

[1] E. T. Vernon, *The Holy Mount*, 37.

¶ One cannot but ask what was the "high mountain" on which six days from the time of Peter's confession, whilst still in this region [of Cæsarea Philippi], "he was transfigured" before His three disciples? It is impossible to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine, and one of whose ancient titles was derived from this circumstance, and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. The fact of its rising high above all the other hills of Palestine, and of its setting the last limit to the wanderings of Him who was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, falls in with the supposition which the words inevitably force upon us. The sacredness of Hermon in the eyes of the surrounding tribes may well have fitted it for the purpose, even if it did not give it the name, of "the Holy Mountain." High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken "apart by themselves." Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendour with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not, perhaps, be wholly overlooked. At any rate, the remote heights above the sources of the Jordan witnessed the moment when, His work in His own peculiar sphere being ended, He set His face for the last time "to go up to Jerusalem."[1]

¶ A strong Christian tradition dating from the fourth century makes Tabor the scene of our Lord's Transfiguration. It was probably natural that this event should become connected with the most conspicuous mountain of Galilee, and as early as the sixth century three churches had been built to commemorate the three tabernacles which Peter proposed to erect. But at this particular period Tabor was covered with houses, and therefore could not correctly be described as "apart" (Matt. xvii. 1). Then again, just before His Transfiguration, Jesus was far away from Tabor, in the neighbourhood of Hermon.[2]

4. We are told by St. Luke that they went up "to pray." It seems most natural to accept this statement not only as correct, but as a sufficient statement of the object our Saviour had in view. The thought of transfiguration may not have been in His mind at all. Here, as always, He was guided by the will of His Father in heaven; and it is not necessary to suppose that to His human mind that will was made known earlier than the occasion required. We are not told that He went up to be transfigured: we are told

[1] A. P. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, 399.

[2] A. W. Cooke, *Palestine in Geography and History*, i. 132.

that He went up to pray. It seems probable that the idea was to spend the night in prayer. We know that this was a not infrequent custom with Him; and if ever there seemed a call for it, it must have been now, when about to begin that sorrowful journey which led to Calvary. With this thought agree all the indications which suggest that it was evening when they ascended, night while they remained on the top, and morning when they came down. This, too, will account in the most natural manner for the drowsiness of the Apostles; and the fact that their Lord felt none of it only proved how much more vivid was His realization of the awfulness of the crisis than theirs was. We are to think of the four, then, as slowly and thoughtfully climbing the hill at eventide, carrying their abbas, or rugs, on which they would kneel for prayer, and which, if they needed rest, they would wrap round them, as is the Oriental custom. By the time they reached the top, night would have cast its veil of mystery on the grandeur of the mountains round about them, while snowy Hermon in the gloom would rise like a mighty giant to heaven, its summit "visited all night by troops of stars." Never before or since has there been such a prayer meeting on this earth of ours.

Having gone up to pray, they would doubtless all kneel down together. As the night wore on, the three disciples, being exhausted, would wrap themselves in their rugs and go to sleep; while the Master, to whom sleep at such a time was unnatural, if not impossible, would continue in prayer. Can we suppose that that time of pleading was free from agony? His soul had been stirred within Him when Peter tempted Him to turn aside from the path of the cross; and may we not with reverence suppose that on that lonely hill-top, as later in the Garden, there might be in His heart the cry, "Father, if it be possible"? If only the way upward were open now! Has not the Kingdom of God been preached in Judæa, in Samaria, in Galilee, away to the very borderlands? and has not the Church been founded? and has not authority been given to the Apostles? Is it, then, absolutely necessary to go back, back to Jerusalem, not to gain a triumph, but to accept the last humiliation and defeat? There cannot but have been a great conflict of feeling; and with all the determination to be obedient even unto death, there must have been a shrinking from the way of the cross, and a great longing for heaven and

home and the Father's welcome. The longing cannot be gratified; it is not possible for the cup to pass from Him; but just as later in Gethsemane there came an angel from heaven strengthening Him, so now His longing for heaven and home and the smile of His Father is gratified in the gladdening and strengthening experience which followed His prayer—a foretaste of the heavenly glory, so vivid, so satisfying, that He will thenceforth be strong, for the joy that is set before Him, to endure the cross, despising the shame. For behold, as He prays, His face becomes radiant, the glory within shining through the veil of His mortal flesh. We all know that this flesh of ours is more or less transparent, and that in moments of exaltation the faces of even ordinary men will shine as with a heavenly lustre. We need not wonder, then, that it should have been so with our Lord, only in an immeasurably higher degree: that His face should have shone even "as the sun"; and that, though He could not yet ascend to heaven, heaven's brightness should have descended on Him and wrapped Him round, so that even "his garments became white as the light."

¶ "And while he was praying, the appearance of his face underwent a change," says Luke; he alone preserving for us this vital fact of "prayer," of profound and deliberate absorption in the Divine Life, as the immediate cause of the transfigured bodily state. This change, this radiance, seemed to the astonished onlookers to spread to the whole personality; conferring upon it an enhancement and a splendour which the limited brains of those who saw could only translate into terms of light—"His clothing became white, and like the flashing lightning"—whiter, says Mark, with a touch of convincing realism, than any fuller can bleach it. Bound together by a community of expectation and personal devotion, and now in that state upon the verge of sleep in which the mind is peculiarly open to suggestion, it is not marvellous that this, to them conclusive and almost terrible, testimony of Messiahship should produce strange effects upon those who were looking on. In an atmosphere so highly charged with wonder and enthusiasm, the human brain is at a hopeless disadvantage. Such concepts as it is able to manufacture from the amazing material poured in on it will take of necessity a symbolic form. In minds dominated by the influence of a personality of unique spiritual greatness, and full of images of those Old Testament prophecies which seemed to be in course of actual fulfilment before their eyes, all the conditions were present for the produc-

tion of a collective vision in which such images played a prominent part; bodying forth the ideas evoked in them by the spectacle of their Master's ecstasy. That Master, whose deep humanity had never failed them yet, whose strangest powers had always been evoked in response to the necessities of men, was now seen removed from them by a vast distance. Unconscious of their very existence, His whole being appeared to be absorbed in communion with another order, by them unseen.[1]

¶ There is a height in prayer above communion. What shall I call it? It may be named the prayer of surrender. Very few ever utter that prayer to its utmost syllable. Few ever really lay themselves, spirit and soul and body, on God's altar. We are always withholding something, keeping back from God some dear and cherished possession, some gift or talent or power, some love or pleasure or passion. We will not yield up some one dear and tightly held joy. Yet when we do pray this prayer we pass on to an experience which seals us with a seal that cannot be broken, to the service of God for ever. Then on the transparent mirror of the face the light leaps and flashes, and some of it abides. That is the secret of that heavenly and almost intolerable radiance on the face of Moses which men feared to look upon. He had come out of that most holy place and offered up his prayer of surrender in these solemn words, "But if not, blot out my name from thy book." That is why Stephen's face shone in the council. His clear and discerning mind saw his martyr death before him, and he yielded himself up to God's will. Could we have seen Paul's face when he heard God's words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and meekly accepted God's will, we would have seen the sheen of the transfiguring light also upon it. He did not know whether he was "in the body" or "out of it." That is why Christ's face shone as He prayed. And that is how our faces also shall be transfigured.[2]

5. With what overwhelming awe must these men have looked upon their Master! They had become familiar with Him as with a man sharing their nature, His face lined with the furrows of care, His visage sorrowfully marred, beautiful, yea, passing beautiful, and yet always overshadowed with the signs of sorrow. As they looked up from their bewildered sleep in the darkness of the night, they beheld Him white as the light, His raiment glistening as with the radiance of the snow-capped peaks behind

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, 118.
[2] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 182.

Him, His whole Person standing out in clear relief against the dark background, the lightning flashing upon the bosom of the night. Long years after, Peter, writing of the vision, said, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty." The word there translated "majesty" occurs only three times in Scripture. Once it is translated "mighty power," once "magnificence," and once "majesty." The thought it suggests is that of splendour, of overwhelming beauty and glory, and that which arrests and subdues the mind to the point of adoration and worship; and Peter, looking back to the splendours of that night scene, wrote, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

¶ The Transfiguration is the key-word of the Incarnation. Jesus Christ went up into a mountain to reveal to the chosen three the secret of the Kingdom. Before they ever tasted death they were to see the Kingdom come on earth. A moment was to sweep over them when the hidden workings were to be laid bare to them of that action which should hereafter perpetuate the tabernacling of God among men. Alas! their eyes were heavy at the time, and their wits were clouded, and they were dazed by the excess of glory! They wist not what they saw or said. But yet one swift glance they won before the cloud enveloped them, and in that glance they caught sight of Jesus transfigured. Transfigured! It was the Jesus whom they knew, the same, and not another. Everything that constituted His identity in face and form was there, unobliterated—only, it was raised to a new power, it was possessed by unanticipated capacities. A Higher Force had smitten into it, had released itself through it, so that it shone and glowed. It was uplifted, changed, yet the same, burning, yet never consumed. The body showed itself, not as unnaturalized, but as the true and proper organ of the forces which should reveal themselves through it. It was made clear that its natural construction adapted it to become the vehicle of the invading Spirit: it finds its own life in becoming transfigured.[1]

¶ The Transfiguration had a purpose also in relation to the disciples. It was designed to reconcile them to the incredible and repulsive idea of Messiah's sufferings by revealing to them the glories that should follow. What did they hear as they listened to the converse betwixt those two glorified saints who bore the greatest names on Israel's roll of honour? They heard them talking of "the decease," or, as it is in Greek, "the exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." In the judgment of Moses and Elijah that issue, which seemed to the disciples an in-

[1] Canon Scott Holland.

tolerable ignominy and a crushing disaster, was a splendid triumph, like the mighty deliverance which God had wrought for Israel when He brought her by the hand of Moses out of the land of bondage and made her a free nation. It is very significant that in the copies of St. Luke's Gospel which were in use in St. Chrysostom's day, this sentence ran: "They spake of the *glory* which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And such was the conception of her Lord's sufferings which was by and by revealed to the Church. "We behold Jesus," it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "by reason of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."[1]

He taketh us
On a high mountain, nor forsaketh us,
But turneth round upon us, glistening
In face and raiment, as He were a King.
In converse we discover at His side
Moses, Elias. . . . He is glorified,
The Son of God: and Peter would abide
Forever with these three, and prays to rear
Three tabernacles. And the light grows drear.
Some sin is on us that no wise we wist;
We are closed up as in God's very fist;
We cannot see: only there floats above,
Rumbling and murmuring as an angry love,
Some element in havoc that doth press
Against the idle word that Peter said.
I know not by what stroke,
Beneath that awful cloak,
Elias and the Law-giver are brought
To nothingness in the Eternal Thought:
For presently we are allowed,
Through adumbrations of the cloud,
To hear the Father's Voice in its caress,
As if from Chaos sped
Toward that belovëd Head—
Jealous and watered as of rain-drop tears
That Voice appears
In majesty on the cloud's breaking rim:
"Lo, this is my belovëd Son; hear Him!"
The Lord is glorified; we see
His Body as in glory it will be—
Nothing it lacks
Save of His Wounds the lovely tracks.

[1] D. Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, 274.

I, John, who lay upon His bosom, I
Must testify
I never saw Him—now
I see Him in the Father and rejoice:
He standeth meek amid His snows,
Flushed as a rose,
For we have heard that Voice.
How maiden in humility His brow!
Almost He whispereth "No word of this!
It is our secret: I should take amiss
That of this hour one word be said,
Peter, till I am risen from the dead."
And, having spoken, He looks back on me,
And in an instant my theology
Is given; and I know the Word is God.[1]

II.

The Significance of the Transfiguration.

"He was transfigured before them." It was Tindale who first used this word to describe the change that took place, and we have adhered to it ever since. It is the best English word we have to explain the original but not the most exact. "Transformed" is more literal, while "metamorphosed" is simply the Greek word anglicized, but it is too foreign and cumbrous. The word "changed," which is the equivalent for the same word in Corinthians, is too weak. We do not have a word that is exactly suitable and sufficient. Moreover, it is clear that the evangelists felt themselves at a loss adequately to describe the glory that covered their Lord at that supreme hour. One evangelist says, "The fashion of his countenance was altered"—"became other" as the word may be literally translated; while another says "it did shine as the sun," and we understand that the face shone with a radiance exquisitely bright. And not the face only; the whole body apparently became radiant with light, so that it shone through the garments, making them appear "white as the light." St. Mark finds his illustration on the spot, "exceeding white as snow." St. Luke goes further and finds his semblance in the lightning.

[1] Michael Field, *Mystic Trees*, 20.

¶ It is possible that this radiance may be related to the so-called *aura*, which the abnormally extended vision of many "psychics" perceives as a luminous cloud of greater or less brilliance surrounding the human body; which varies in extent and intensity with the vitality of the individual, and which they often report as shining with a white or golden glory about those who live an exceptionally holy life. This phenomenon, once dismissed as a patent absurdity by all "rational" persons, is now receiving the serious attention of physicians and psychologists; and it is well within the range of possibilities that the next generation of scholars will find it no more "supernatural" than radio-activity or the wireless telegraph. It is one of the best attested of the abnormal phenomena connected with the mystic type: the lives of the saints providing us with examples of it which range from the great and luminous glory to a slight enhancement of personality under the stress of spiritual joy.[1]

1. If we imagine that the sun-like splendour of our Lord's countenance and the snow-like whiteness of His raiment were but a reflection of the glory of heaven, we shall miss the significance of the Transfiguration. There was a manifestation of heavenly glory—the bright cloud overshadowed them—but that was not till after the glory so graphically described in the narrative had shown itself in our Lord's face and raiment. What the disciples saw was the bright shining of Christ's own spirit, which, asserting itself over flesh and raiment, made the one to shine as the sun and the other to glisten like the driven snow. It was *His* glory the disciples saw; the glory which belonged to His pure and perfect character, and which belongs in a greater or less degree to every one who is changed into the same image. For "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

¶ We are told that Francis of Assisi, when absorbed in prayer, "became changed almost into another man"; and once at least was "beheld praying by night, his hands stretched out after the manner of a cross, his whole body uplifted from the earth and wrapt in a shining cloud as though the wondrous illumination of the body were a witness to the wondrous enlightenment of his mind." The sympathetic vision of her closest companions saw Teresa's personality, when she was writing her great mystical works, so changed and exalted that it seemed to them that her

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, 120.

countenance shone with a supernatural light. Again, St. Catherine of Bologna, always pale on account of her chronic ill-health, was seen by her sisters in choir with a "shining, rosy countenance radiant like light": and we are told of St. Catherine of Genoa, that when she came forth from her hiding-place after ecstasy "her face was rosy as it might be a cherub's: and it seemed as if she might have said, Who shall separate me from the love of God?" In such reports we seem to see the germ of that experience which lies at the root of the story of the Transfiguration of Christ. As Moses came down with shining face from the mountain, so these turn towards the temporal order a countenance that is irradiated by the reflection of the Uncreated Light.[1]

2. The Transfiguration of Jesus was the natural consummation of His human life, the natural issue of all that had preceded it. Born into the world by the Holy Spirit, He had lived a life linked to, and yet separated from, humanity; linked to it in all the essential facts of its nature, separate from it in its sin, both as a principle and as an activity, He had taken His way from His first outlook upon life as a human being, a babe in His mother's arms, through the years of childhood and growth, through all the temptation and testing of manhood, and through the severer temptation of public ministry, and here, at last, that humanity, perfect in creation, perfect through probation, was perfected in glory. The life of Jesus was bound to reach this point of transfiguration. It could do no other. In Jesus of Nazareth there was the perfect unfolding before Heaven and before men of the Divine intention as to the process of human life. Beginning in weakness and limitation, passing through difficulties and temptation, gaining perpetual victory over temptation by abiding only, at all times and under all circumstances, in the will of God. At last, all the testing being ended, the life passed into the presence of God Himself, and into the light of heaven, not through the gate of death, but through the painless and glorious process of transfiguration. The Transfiguration of Jesus was the outcome of His unceasing victory in every hour of temptation. The garrison of His life had been kept against every attack of the foe; no room had been found in any avenue of His being, or in all the circle of His manhood, for anything contrary to the will of God. His life

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, 120.

was a perfect harmony, and the unceasing burden of its music was the goodness, the perfectness, and acceptableness of the will of God.

¶ Reverently take a flower as an illustration of the process, watching it in its progress from seedling to perfect blossoming. The blossom rested in the seed in potentiality and possibility. Take a seed and hold it in the hand—strange little seed, without beauty, the very embodiment of weakness. But lying within that husk in which the human eye detects no line of beauty or grace, no gleam or flash of glory, there lie the gorgeous colours and magnificent flower itself. From that seed through processes of law, plant and bud proceed, until at last the perfect blossom is formed. God's humanity has blossomed once in the course of the ages, and that transfigured man upon the holy mount, flashing in the splendour of a light like the sun, glistering with the glory of a whiteness like that of the snow, and flaming with the magnificent beauty of the lightning that flashes its radiance upon the darkness, that was God's perfect man. That was the realization of the thought that was in the mind of God when He said, "Let us make man in our image."[1]

3. The Transfiguration marked Christ's triumph over temptation. On the mount He was again tempted to refuse the cross, to escape His death and His shame, and to pass with Moses and Elijah into that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. But in that high hour He renounced the glory; He accepted the cup, and turned His face to Calvary.

It is the renunciation of that glory on the hill-top that is the moral wonder of this great incident. Conceive of the wonderful position which our Lord occupied at the time of this Transfiguration. He had risen to the climax; He had transmuted the innocence of childhood into the holiness of manhood. He had uniformly resisted sin, its nearest approaches to His Spirit, and He rose to the completeness of manhood at the age of thirty-three. shall we say, absolutely unstained by sin. If ever there was a case in which the old law, "Do this and thou shalt live," should come into play, it was now. He had kept the law of God. It was His right to enter into the glory and blessedness of immortality without death, its pains and its humiliations. And as He offered Himself with the completeness of His life to God, offered Himself

[1] G. Campbell Morgan.

there on the Mount of Transfiguration, the choice appears to have been given to Him. The glory of the higher mode of existence budded upon His person, but, had He entered heaven then, He must have entered it alone, and the golden gates must have closed upon Him. And so, as a French writer says, He turned His back on the arch of triumph, and resolutely decided upon the pathway of shadows and of grief that led to glory through the grave.

And why? Because He loved men, and could not even go to heaven alone. Love, says the Song of Solomon, is stronger than death; but the Transfiguration proves that it is stronger than something which is stronger than death itself—stronger than heaven and the attractions of heaven for a heavenly mind. That was the renunciation of the Christ.

¶ I read a wonderful story about Buddha, which is a strange adumbration of this experience of our Lord. It is said that when Buddha, before he was styled the enlightened one, was sitting at the base of the tree of meditation, there passed before him in procession temptations of various sorts. First temptations of the flesh, and Gautama Buddha put these aside. Then temptations of the mind, and Buddha put these aside. Then various temptations of the spirit, and Buddha put these aside. And then came a subtle temptation. A temptress whispered in his ear, "Thou hast now overcome all the temptations; enter into Nirvana now"—Nirvana being the Buddhist heaven. And Buddha very nearly gave way, the legend says. But lo! as he sat at the base of the tree, he heard a rustling in the leaves of the tree above him. And the rustling of the leaves was caused by the agitation of those little creatures of God that crept amongst the leaves, who were looking forward, says the legend, to being saved through Buddha; but if he escaped now into Nirvana by himself they would be left unsaved; and the tree rustled with the agitation of the little creatures; and Buddha was recalled, and he refused the temptation to enter Nirvana then.[1]

¶ Among the many ways in which we miss the help and hold of Scripture, none is more subtle than our habit of supposing that, even as man, Christ was free from the Fear of Death. How could He then have been tempted as we are? since among all the trials of the earth, none spring from the dust more terrible than that Fear. It had to be borne by Him, indeed, in a unity, which we can never comprehend, with the foreknowledge of victory,—as His sorrow for Lazarus, with the consciousness of the power to

[1] G. A. Johnston Ross.

restore him; but it *had* to be borne, and that in its full earthly terror; and the presence of it is surely marked for us enough by the rising of those two at His side. When, in the desert, He was girding Himself for the work of life, angels of life came and ministered unto Him; now in the fair world, when He is girding Himself for the work of death, the ministrants come to Him from the grave. But from the grave conquered. One, from that tomb under Abarim, which His own hand had sealed so long ago; the other, from the rest into which he had entered, without seeing corruption. There stood by Him Moses and Elias, and spake of His decease. Then, when the prayer is ended, the task accepted, first, since the star paused over Him at Bethlehem, the full glory falls upon Him from heaven, and the testimony is borne to His everlasting Sonship and power. "Hear ye him."[1]

4. The Transfiguration was the preparation for the cross; it was the vision of the crown before the fight. The cross was set up on the holy mount because it was the Divine purpose from the first to cover the cross with glory. Only eight days have passed since first it was announced to men that the Son of God should be crucified. Already it is seen from the attitude of the disciples in general and Peter in particular that the cross will be an offence unto men. Without delay this mistaken notion, so far as these disciples are concerned, must be corrected. It must not be allowed to continue unchecked. It is necessary that those who are being trained to be the first preachers of the cross should not remain long or altogether under a misapprehension as to its significance. They must be given to understand that it is not without a high purpose, and though they may not yet understand much, their mind must be opened to perceive that somehow there is a hidden glory in what seems only a shame and a curse. Jesus too, in this hour of final acquiescence in His destiny, must, for the sake of His faith and courage, see something of the honour as well as feel somewhat of the sorrow of His cross. And so Calvary is anticipated and transfigured on the holy mount. We see it all as they speak of His decease. Jesus is in the midst bearing His cross. But the visage which will afterwards be "marred more than any man" now shines with the splendour of the sun; the raiment that will be gambled for glistens like the snow. The malefactors are displaced, and instead we find Moses

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, iv. chap. xx. § 49.

and Elijah who, themselves covered with glory, adorn the cross. Instead of the darkness and the cry of desertion, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" there is the bright cloud and the approving voice of the Heavenly Father, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is a marvellous and striking situation; the cross, while only eight days old in its earthly history, set up and surrounded by a wealth of highest glory.

¶ The Transfiguration was designed, in the first instance, to strengthen Jesus and nerve Him for the dread ordeal which awaited Him. It was as though the veil had been drawn aside and the eternal world for a little space disclosed to His view. It was like a vision of home to the exile, like a foretaste of rest to the weary traveller. He was granted a glimpse of the glory which He had resigned that He might tabernacle among the children of men, winning redemption for them, and an earnest likewise of the joy that was set before Him. From the vantage-ground of the Mount of Transfiguration He descried the consummation which awaited Him beyond the Hill of Calvary. Nor was that the only consolation which was vouchsafed to Him. His heart had been grieved by the dulness of the twelve, the folly of the multitude, and the hostility of the rulers, and in that transcendent hour it was revealed to Him how His work was viewed by God and the glorified saints. Though He stood alone on earth, misunderstood, forsaken, and persecuted, He had Heaven's sympathy and approval.[1]

¶ A great artist has represented the crown of life which Christ holds out to men as a circlet of gold with another circlet of thorns intertwined. The idea symbolized is true to fact. Jesus Himself experienced it. Here on the mount He is being crowned with glory; it is a moment of honour and joy, a season to be prolonged and enjoyed without anything intervening, but He still stands upon the earth, and within the gold there is the thorn which yet will tear and bruise His holy brow. "They spake of his decease."[2]

III.

The Practical Suggestions of the Transfiguration.

In one sense the Transfiguration of Christ rises into a plane of thought and feeling beyond our power to enter. No other son

[1] D. Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, 272.
[2] E. T. Vernon, *The Holy Mount*, 83.

of man was, or ever shall be, transfigured as was the Lord. No other ever reached manhood without a sting of memory or a qualm of regret. No other ever kept the faith with a clear vision and an unbroken victory. No other ever lived under the sure and constant sense that this world was but his Father's footstool, and the world unseen his Father's house. Yet we must not forget that the Transfiguration was a wholly human experience. It was as human as His hunger, or His weariness, or the accents of His voice in prayer, or His trembling under temptation. Because it is so entirely human it is possible for us to understand its significance, to pass through it each in his own measure, and to enter into its felicity and reward.

¶ The Transfiguration is not an impressive spectacle arranged for the Apostles, but a peep into the awful background behind life. Let me use a simple parable: imagine a man who had a friend whom he greatly admired and loved, and suppose him to be talking with his friend, who suddenly excuses himself on the plea of an engagement, and goes out; and the other follows him, out of curiosity, and sees him meet another man and talk intently with him, not deferentially or humbly, but as a man talks with an equal. And then drawing nearer he might suddenly see that the man his friend has gone out to meet, and with whom he is talking so intently, is some high minister of State, or even the King himself! That is a simple comparison, to make clear what the Apostles might have felt. They had gone into the mountain expecting to hear their Master speak quietly to them or betake Himself to silent prayer; and then they find Him robed in light and holding converse with the spirits of the air, telling His plans, so to speak, to two great prophets of the ancient world. If this had been but a pageant enacted for their benefit to dazzle and bewilder them, it would have been a poor and self-conscious affair; but it becomes a scene of portentous mystery if one thinks of them as being permitted to have a glimpse of the high, urgent, and terrifying things that were going on all the time in the unseen background of the Saviour's mind. The essence of the greatness of the scene is that it was *overheard*. And thus I think that wonder and beauty, those two mighty forces, take on a very different value for us when we can come to realize that they are small hints given us, tiny glimpses conceded to us, of some very great and mysterious thing that is pressingly and speedily proceeding, every day and every hour, in the vast background of life; and we ought to realize that it is not only human life as we see

it which is the active, busy, forceful thing; that the world with all its noisy cities, its movements and its bustle, is not a burning point hung in darkness and silence, but that it is just a little fretful affair with infinitely larger, louder, fiercer, stronger powers, working, moving, pressing onwards, thundering in the background; and that the huge forces, laws, activities, behind the world, are not perceived by us any more than we perceive the vast motion of great winds, except in so far as we see the face of the waters rippled by them, or the trees bowed all one way in their passage.[1]

1. *The soul may be transfigured.*—In those hours of absorbing emotion, in desire and communion and surrender, God's Spirit works in upon the soul. By a spiritual law the whole inner core of our being is reacted upon, and mind and heart and will are transformed. This subjective blessing of prayer—the cleansing and renewing of the soul while we pray—is not the only, not the supreme, answer to prayer; but it is the first, the immediate, and the most enduring answer we can receive; it is the answer which is never denied.

¶ What possibilities of glory there are in human nature! Scientists perceive in us undeveloped senses, and anticipate a period when man will possess qualities, perceptions, and powers far exceeding any attributes of the present. It is in Christ Jesus that the latent glory of our nature stands most fully and conspicuously declared. In Him we see what man is in the Divine ideal. He has shown of what our moral nature is capable; in Him we behold the transfigured conscience, will, affections, character. He has shown of what this physical vesture is capable in exaltation, refinement, and splendour.[2]

2. *The face may be transfigured.*—The face is the involuntary and, at the last, the accurate index of the soul. A man may "smile, and smile, and be a villain" through a few years of his life. But in the end, let him pose and posture and dissemble as he will, what he has become in his soul is seen on his face. As surely as the sap wells up in the stem, and bursts out into leaf and blossom, and as certainly as the acid in a man's blood will be seen in the scab upon his skin, the passion of his soul renewed in hours of consecration will become the light and the line which all men's eyes can see.

[1] A. C. Benson, *Joyous Gard*, 120.
[2] W. L. Watkinson.

¶ There were two faces which the great artists of the Middle Ages held it to be their just ambition to represent. One was the face of Christ. But that face was as a rule the artist's despair. The other face was that of the Madonna Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth. These mediæval artists sought far and near for faces of perfect beauty as models for their portraits. They looked into every young face in the hope that the ideal in line and form and colour would be found. One can see in all the galleries of the Continent those pictures of radiant youth and dazzling bloom. But the nobler minds soon passed beyond the thrall of those faultless faces with their dimpled beauty and their earthly charm. They began to search after something more lovely and more significant than skin-deep loveliness. They began to discern that the face of some simple peasant girl, marked by no unusual grace of contour or of colouring, could wear a glory which earth could not give. They marked that her daily prayer before the cross had schooled her soul to God's discipline and enriched it with God's grace. So Raphael painted as his Madonnas a simple peasant girl, with motherhood's human yearning in her eyes, and the pale austerity of consecration matching her white stole, and the mark of her rapt and adoring humility manifest in the grace and sweetness of her air. They realized that when the soul had become transfigured the light in the temple of God shone through.[1]

3. *The life may be transfigured.*—"His raiment was white and glistering." We read these words with a little wonder and more doubt. We are tempted to think that they are a note of exaggeration in the report. We wonder if the white snow of the Hermon Hill above them had not dazzled their eyes. But quite apart from the fact that the radiance of the face would steal down and illumine Christ's white robe, this statement is a hint and a prophecy of a vital truth. The transfiguration of the soul within is not only seen in the shining of the face; it begins to transform and to ennoble the very habit of the life. It is nothing marvellous to us that after years of devotion and long continuing in hours of prayer and the renewing of the mind from day to day, the clothes a man wears proclaim the transfiguring power of the Spirit of God. Although not suddenly and in a moment, yet surely and with increasing beauty, all life is transfigured. A man's look, his courtesies of speech and of gesture, his walk and poise, his ways and customs, his gifts and services, the very

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 185.

furnishing of his home and all the habits of his life, become beautiful.

¶ Astronomers tell us that dead, cold matter falls from all corners of the system into the sun, drawn by its magic magnetism from farthest space, and, plunging into that great reservoir of fire, the deadest and coldest matter glows with fervid heat and dazzling light. So you and I, dead, cold, dull, opaque, heavy fragments, drawn into mysterious oneness with Christ, the Sun of our Souls, shall be transformed into His own image, and like Him be light and heat which shall radiate through the universe.[1]

¶ Many old faces have hard lines, grim angles, cold and cruel aspects. They reflect what the man has become in soul. They are the faces of men who are self-centred, unloving, and unhelpful. They reveal to every eye the fact that the man lives without prayer. But when life is increasingly and more deeply prayer, when, in desire for things good and true and beautiful, in communion with the God of our life, in surrender after surrender, the soul is transfigured, then we see not only the shining face but the raiment white and glistering. Newman has told this story in three impressive verses—

I saw thee once, and nought discern'd
For stranger to admire;
A serious aspect, but it burn'd
With no unearthly fire.

Again I saw, and I confess'd
Thy speech was rare and high;
And yet it vex'd my burden'd breast,
And scared, I knew not why.

I saw once more, and awe-struck gazed
On face, and form, and air;
God's living glory round thee blazed—
A Saint—a Saint was there![2]

¶ No outline of his personality can be at all adequate without the attempt being made to describe an exceedingly elusive, but at the same time distinguishing, characteristic, which the word charm does not entirely cover; it was this, that the Seer in him, or, if it must be called by the more modern name, the transcendental Self, was always visible. Intensely human as he was,

[1] A. Maclaren, *Paul's Prayers.*
[2] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 188.

understanding all in the lives of those about him—the most trifling difficulties and the most profound, entering gaily into the merriest mood or the manliest sport—the presence of this transcendental Self was always apparent. Everything about him seemed an expression of this, and if touched by some thought of specially wide reach from a friend or from a book, the contact with his imaginative Self sent a sort of transfigured look into his face, as if a flame had been lighted.[1]

[1] M. S. Watts, *George Frederic Watts*, i. 115.

Eternal Life.

LITERATURE.

Allen (G. W.), *Wonderful Words and Works*, 85.
Bain (J. A.), *Questions Answered by Christ*, 52.
Cockin (G. S.), *Some Difficulties in the Life of our Lord*, 114.
Cooper (E.), *Fifty-Two Family Sermons*, 116.
Davidson (A. B.), *The Called of God*, 299.
Eyton (R.), *The Ten Commandments*, 147.
Goodwin (H.), *Parish Sermons*, iii. 198.
Lucas (B.), *Conversations with Christ*, 182.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew xviii.–xxviii., 47.
Morrow (H. W.), *Questions Asked and Answered by our Lord*, 210.
Prothero (G.), *The Armour of Light*, 253.
Salmon (G.), *The Reign of Law*, 194.
Shedd (W. G. T.), *Sermons to the Spiritual Man*, 34.
Christian World Pulpit, xxxviii. 152 (M. Dods).
Church Pulpit Year Book, 1906, p. 182.
Homiletic Review, New Ser., xxxvii. 424 (G. E. Faber).
Preacher's Magazine, xii. 7 (M. G. Pearse).

Eternal Life.

And behold, one came to him and said, Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?—Matt. xix. 16.

1. This young ruler, who appears and disappears again so suddenly in the gospel narrative, is one of the most interesting and tragic figures in the Bible. The interest is enhanced by the strong resemblance he seems to bear to the Apostle Paul in circumstances and character. Both were in the prime of early manhood when they came into contact with Jesus. Both were rulers, with all that such a position implied of theological education, social position, and ecclesiastical influence. Both were religious to the full extent of their light, striving to obey the Law and believing that they had succeeded. Both were lovable in disposition. Both were rich. The one, we are told, had great possessions. The wealth of the Apostle of the Gentiles is inferred from various circumstances. It is inferred from the education that he received, from the fact that he was a ruler, from the ease and air of equality with which he addressed nobles, governors, and kings, from the position occupied by his relatives in Jerusalem, from the two years' imprisonment in which Felix detained him in the hope of obtaining a bribe, from the consideration shown to him on the voyage to Rome, from the unusual permission given him to take Luke with him. It is also suggestive that his favourite description of the gospel is "riches," a suitable word on the lips of one who had been forced to ask himself if he had received compensation for what he had sacrificed. The point of decision in both men was the same—the necessity to abandon a supposed righteousness; and the touchstone of sincerity in both was the same—their readiness to abandon wealth for Christ. At that point the difference arose. The one went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. The other counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

2. Never before had such an one come to Jesus. That he should come at all was much; that he should come at such a time was very much; that he should come at such a time and in such a way was a splendid proof of independence, of courage, and of earnestness. It was utterly unlike those about him. A man whose religion was not a cloak for all kinds of self-indulgence; whose wealth was not a thing that possessed and enslaved him; who had not learned to put the anise and cummin in place of justice and mercy; who did not go priding himself on his long robes, or his long prayers, or his trumpeted alms—free alike from hypocrisy or pride, simple and sincere. Nor was it any sudden outburst of emotion kindled by the sight of that face, by His words of wisdom, or by the tokens of His tenderness. No shallow-ground hearer of the Word was this, receiving it with joy, and then when the sun was up withering away. There was the fixed habit of goodness in him. A blameless youth had led up to a generous and noble manhood. So sincere, so brave, so earnest, no wonder that Jesus beholding him loved him. The look, the tone, the manner of Jesus told how His heart went forth to him.

¶ It may be instructive to set this young man beside that other ruler who came to Jesus. Nicodemus came at the very outset of the Saviour's ministry, when as yet men had not made up their minds as to His authority, and when at any rate there was neither peril nor social sacrifice in recognizing Him. And yet Nicodemus came by night, under cover of the darkness. He came when Jesus was alone, or when only John was with Him. But now Jesus is excommunicated; He is denounced and condemned, and the authorities have already sought to stone Him. On every side there are those who watch Him with a hatred that only His death will satisfy. To honour Him in any way is to incur their suspicion and denunciation. Yet this young ruler comes openly before all the people. And more than that, there is an enthusiasm in his coming, an ardent admiration for Jesus Christ that no other rich man ever showed. He came running—that was a startling enough thing amidst the leisurely strut of the Pharisee and the languid indifference of the rich. Such enthusiasm has always been regarded as vulgar by the well-to-do; and to be vulgar is with them worse than to be wicked. He came with a respect and reverence that acknowledged alike the greatness and the goodness of the blessed Lord. He kneeled at the

feet of the Saviour, and asked Him, as the great authority, "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"[1]

I.

The Question.

1. By "eternal life" we must understand not merely continued existence, but continued happy existence, than which there can be no higher good. Many people are happy here—at times, and for times. But the old saying, "No one is always happy," shows how constant is man's experience of the mutability of happiness. And many men wonder why this is so. The truth is—though few people see it at first—that nothing *is*, or is real, but what is in harmony with the mind and will of God. He alone can create. What man seems to create, as apart from God, can last only so long as man's illusion lasts; for it is illusion alone that gives such "works" apparent reality. As in the case of the house founded on the sand, a little time and those natural forces which can overthrow anything illusory will distinguish the apparent from the real. The illusion will vanish like a burst bubble; and what is real—that is, what is in harmony with the mind and will of God—will alone endure. Therefore eternal life can mean only a life (desires, tastes, workings, productions) that is in harmony with the mind and will of God. All else is folly, vanity, emptiness, illusion, which, like the state of childhood, can last its time, and then must pass away.

¶ In the complex, of vivid, operative convictions connected with Eternal Life there is, first, a keen yet double sense of Abidingness — an absolute Abidingness, pure Simultaneity, Eternity, in God; and a relative abidingness, a quasi-eternity, Duration, in man (*qua* personality). And the Eternity is always experienced by man only within, together with, and in contrast to, the Duration. And both Eternity and Duration stand out, in man's deepest consciousness, with even painful contrast, against all mere Succession, all sheer flux and change. Here the special value lies in the double sense that we are indeed actually touched, penetrated, and supported by the purely Eternal; and yet that we ourselves shall never, either here or hereafter, be more than

[1] M. G. Pearse.

quasi-eternal, durational. For only this double sense will save us from the perilous alternatives of an uncreaturely sheer fixity and an animal mere flux and change. We thus gain a perennial source of continuity and calm. There is, next, the keen sense of Otherness in Likeness. We are genuinely like, and we are genuinely unlike, God, the Realized Perfection. Hence there is ever a certain tension, a feeling of limitation or of emptiness, a looking for a centre outside of, or other than, our own selves. Here again this double sense will be profoundly helpful in our troubles. For thus we are never free to lose reverence for the deepest of what we are, since it is like God, and actually harbours God. And yet we may never lose humility and a thirst for purification, since even the deepest and best of ourselves never is, never will be, God.[1]

2. Where had the ruler got hold of the thought of eternal life? It was far above the dusty speculations and casuistries of the Rabbis. Probably from Christ Himself. He was right in recognizing that the conditions of possessing it were moral, but his conception of "good" was superficial, and he thought more of doing good than of being good, and of the desired life as payment for meritorious actions. In a word, he stood at the point of view of the Old Dispensation. "This do, and thou shalt live," was his belief; and what he wished was further instruction as to what "this" was. He was to be praised in that he docilely brought his question to Jesus, even though, as Christ's answer shows, there was error mingling in his docility. The fact that he came to Christ for a purely religious purpose, not seeking personal advantage for himself or for others, like the crowds who followed for loaves and cures, nor laying traps for Him with puzzles which might entangle Him with the authorities, nor asking theological questions for curiosity, but honestly and earnestly desiring to be helped to lay hold of eternal life, is to be put down to his credit. He is right in counting it the highest blessing.

3. Probably when he came to our Lord with his question the ruler had an idea that Christ would recommend him to build a synagogue or ransom some of his countrymen who were slaves, or do some striking religious act; for when our Lord gives him the simple answer that any child of his own household could have given him, he answers, "What commandment?" fancying He

[1] F. von Hügel, *Eternal Life*, 365.

might mean some rules for extraordinary saintliness which had not been divulged to the common people; and evidently, when our Lord merely repeated the time-worn Decalogue, the young man was disappointed, and somewhat impatiently exclaimed, "All these have I kept from my youth up." He probably did not mean to vaunt his own blamelessness of life. Not at all. He merely meant to state that all his life he had had these commandments before him, and if this were all our Lord had to tell him, then that was no fresh light for him at all. All the good they could do him he had already got; and that was not all the good that could be got, he felt. "What lack I yet?" We are told that the Talmud describes one of the classes of Pharisees as the "tell-me-something-more-to-do-and-I-will-do-it" Pharisee. The young man plainly belonged to this class. He thought he was ready to make any sacrifice or do any great thing which would advance his spiritual condition.

¶ A sermon by the Archbishop of York emphasizing that the test of religion is love for one's neighbours fills her with delight; a sermon on the third anniversary of her baptism by the vicar of St. Mary Abbot's, in which "he laid stress on the impossibility of doing without first being," is noted with ardent enthusiasm a few days afterwards. Then she makes an approving note of some words of Dr. Parker: "He spoke against men who met together in a nice room to discuss how to do something for the suffering masses; if you want to reach them—go to them yourself." "I feel no doubt of religion," she wrote on the threshold of 1891, and she immediately hurried to reflect that it was life essentially: "There is a tremendous difference between admiring and believing in Christianity on the one hand, and on the other putting ourselves under the Divine influence hour by hour." She was discovering the old problem of how to be what one believed, and she was just the person to solve it with almost a ruthless rectitude. She had come to the briar patches already.[1]

4. It is evident that the young ruler made the mistake of forgetting that goodness can come only from God. He apparently imagined that goodness is inherent in man, if he only knew how to exercise it. "What good thing shall I do?" And the Lord answered, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" —as if there were several good things: good works, and good

[1] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 66.

eternal life? There is but one true Good, and that is not a thing, but a Being. God is the One Good, and the One Life. It is as if our Lord would say, "You ask Me a question which I cannot answer directly; because, if I did, you would not understand Me. Eternal life is not a commodity to be purchased at a price. God and eternal life are one. If you have God, you have eternal life; if you enter into God, you enter into eternal life." Or, more plainly, if your idea of life, what you like, desire, work for, is one with God's idea of life, you are thereby one with God. Your will is "at-oned" to His will; and therefore what you *will* you will have eternally, because you *will* what is eternal. For God is good, and good is God; and therefore whatever is good—the good thought, the good desire, the good deed—these, and these only, are eternal.

¶ We should mark and know of a very truth that all manner of virtue and goodness, and even that Eternal Good which is God Himself, can never make a man virtuous, good, or happy, so long as it is outside the soul. Therefore although it be good and profitable that we should ask and learn and know what good and holy men have wrought and suffered, and how God hath dealt with them, and what He hath wrought in and through them, yet it were a thousand times better that we should in ourselves learn and perceive and understand who we are, how and what our own life is, what God is and is doing in us, what He will have from us, and to what ends He will or will not make use of us. Further we should learn that eternal blessedness lieth in one thing alone, and in nought else. And if ever man or the soul is to be made blessed, that one thing alone must be in the soul. Now some might ask, "But what is that one thing?" I answer, it is goodness, or that which has been made good, and yet neither this good nor that, which we can name, or perceive or show; but it is all and above all good things. . . . All the great works and wonders that God has ever wrought or shall ever work in or through the creatures, or even God Himself with all His goodness, so far as these things exist or are done outside of me, can never make me blessed, but only in so far as they exist and are done and loved, known, tasted and felt within me.[1]

5. The ruler also forgot that goodness is not a thing to be done, or an attribute of actions, but an element of character in the person who performs the actions. There is no more common

[1] *Theologia Germanica*, chap. ix.

mistake in religion and ethics than this, and scarcely any mistake more fatal. It shifts the centre of gravity in religion from the centre to the circumference, from the soul to the outward act. The form of his question, "What good thing shall I do?" reveals the short-coming of his apprehension as to how the case really stands. He puts the question much as one might ask, "What premium must I pay to insure my life for a thousand pounds?" The premium is paid, not from the love of paying it, but as the only way of procuring a good we desire to obtain. Note how our Lord, in His reply, at once tries to shift the question to a different, and higher, ground. The question is, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The answer is, "If thou wilt enter into life." Eternal life is not a thing you can have, as you have an estate, or a balance in the bank. It must have you: you must enter into it. A man and his estate are two, and can be separated: a man and his eternal life are one, and cannot be separated.

¶ The young ruler is in the position of a man who comes to his medical adviser complaining of a slight uneasiness which he supposed a tonic or a change of air may remove, and is told that he has heart disease or cancer. Or he is in the position of a sanguine inventor, who has spent the best years of his life on a machine and at last puts it into the hands of a practical man merely to get the fittings adjusted and steam applied, and is told that the whole thing is wrong in conception and can never by any possibility be made to work.[1]

6. The man was thus under an entire misapprehension as to his own spiritual condition. Exemplary in conduct, very much the model of what a wealthy young man ought to be, he had naturally some self-complacency. He had become a ruler of the synagogue, and was probably a man of influence, of large charity and much good feeling, so that the people who saw him come to consult Jesus would suppose that it was something of a condescension on his part. He was not perfectly satisfied, however, about his spiritual condition, but he thought a very little addition to his present attainments would set him above suspicion. He was well enough as he was, but he wished, as any young man with anything in him does wish, to be perfect. He was of an ardent, aspiring temper, and would leave nothing undone that he could

[1] Marcus Dods.

measure his human nature and strength with, so he came to Jesus, not to be taught the mere rudiments, but to receive the finishing touches of a religious education.

¶ In *Cleon* Browning pictures man perfectly civilized, having left the lower and unconscious forms of life and grown to the only life, the life of culture, the pleasure house.

> Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of the soul,
> Which whole surrounding flats of natural life
> Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to;
> A tower that crowns a country.

It is a magnificent conception of the educated, refined, civilized man. And then comes the awful awakening to its utter unsatisfactoriness.

> But alas,
> The soul now climbs it just to perish there!

And then he pictures the visions from that tower of capacity for joy, spread round it, meant for it, mocking it, and the agony of the soul finding itself less capable of enjoyment even than before. The very fatigue consequent on the realization has brought destruction to it.

> We struggle, fain to enlarge
> Our bounded physical recipiency,
> Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,
> Repair the waste of age and sickness: no,
> It skills not! life's inadequate to joy.
> Most progress is most failure.

He fails just as he is learning the value of gifts which he longs to use and cannot. To his patron Protus he writes:—

> Thou diest while I survive?
> Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,
> In this, that every day my sense of joy
> Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
> By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen;
> While every day my hairs fall more and more,
> My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—
> The horror quickening still from year to year,
> The consummation coming past escape
> When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy.

The progress of culture without the spiritual outlet which communion which Christ brings, without the vision of the Eternal, beyond time and sense, being one with us, is only more and more unsatisfying. When we have kept all the commandments of science and philosophy and civilization, the question will recur, "What lack I yet?"[1]

II.

The Answer.

1. Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect—if thou wilt supply what is lacking—sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." This is intended to bring out an application of the law which he had not observed. There is one of the commandments the purpose of which is to pierce the heart and bring not merely the outward action to view, but also the actuating impulses. It is interesting to note that in the case of the Apostle Paul, whose resemblance to the young ruler has been referred to, it was thus that his boasted righteousness dissolved. "I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." So here, too, Jesus brought out the unobserved covetousness by asking the young ruler to sacrifice his wealth for the eternal life he was anxious to acquire.

¶ There is no passion so tenacious as covetousness. Most of the passions which rule men are exposed before long to some withering influences. The passions of young life are bound up with our physical nature, and with changed physical conditions their supremacy may be undermined. The passions of manhood, like ambition and the love of power, are shaken by stormy weather. . . . Covetousness, unlike other passions, grows stronger with advancing years. The power of pleasure dies, the value of fame is found to be unsubstantial, but wealth is hard, solid, lasting —more real than the vain things which charmed our younger years. So wealth is loved, and covetousness grows, and becomes a tyrant vice with increasing years. It was a true instinct which led Dante to picture avarice as an invincible foe. In his pilgrimage he passed safely by the leopard of pleasure; he feared, yet was not vanquished by, the lion of ambition; but the lean wolf of avarice drove him step by step back to the darkness. Such is

[1] R. Eyton, *The Ten Commandments*, 157.

the power of covetousness. It is a vice which renews its strength and is tenacious and remorseless.[1]

2. This young man was plainly told that in order to inherit eternal life he must give up his pleasant home, all his comforts, his position in society, and become a poor, houseless wanderer. This always seems a very harsh demand to make of a well-intentioned youth. One might have expected that, instead of thus bluntly laying down an ultimatum, our Lord would have won him by gentle, gradual, seductive methods. But often the decision of the surgeon who sees what must in the long run be done, and knows that every hour lost is a risk, sounds abrupt and harsh to those who have no such knowledge; and we can scarcely question that the method which our Lord adopted with this young man was not merely the only wise method, but the kindest possible method. This young man's possessions happened to be what prevented him from following Christ; but some pursuit of ours, or some cherished ambition, or some evil habit, or some love of ease, or mere indifference, may be as completely preventing us from learning of Christ and from living as He lived and so attaining true likeness to Him.

¶ "Never fear to let go," he says in his philosophical notes; "it is the only means of getting better things,—self-sacrifice. Let go; let go; we are sure to get back again. How science touches the lesson of morals, which is ever, Give up, give up; deny yourself,—not this everlasting getting; deny yourself, and give, and infinitely more shall be yours; but *give*—not bargaining; give from love, because you must. And if the question will intrude, 'What shall I have if I give up this?' relegate that question to faith, and answer, 'I shall have God. In my giving, in my love, God, who is Love, gives Himself to me.'"[2]

3. But the demand of Jesus was not simply to sacrifice his wealth. Jesus makes no such merely negative claim on men. He desires to put Himself in the place of that which the heart has worshipped. He adds, "And come, follow me." That is, He must have the first place in the heart and life of those who seek eternal life. Christian life is not mere renunciation. It often appears to be such to those who look only at the renuncia-

[1] W. Boyd Carpenter, *The Son of Man Among the Sons of Men*, 148.
[2] *Life and Letters of James Hinton*, 206.

tion by which they are asked to enter on life. To make that renunciation is a great venture of faith. The man who makes it does not yet see that what he will get will make ample amends for what he loses. Christ is Himself the fountain of spiritual life to those who come to Him. He is life. Coming to Him and following Him is life indeed. Many seek life by flinging a loose rein on the neck of their passions, others in the exercise of the intellectual and social gifts they possess. But the richest life is that which calls into exercise the highest elements of our nature, those elements which bring us into touch with the spiritual and the eternal. The life Christ gives is eternal. It is above the powers that bring the lower elements of life to an end. And it is the satisfying life—the life that will compensate for any sacrifice that has to be made to attain it.

¶ Our Saviour, with that wonderful consideration that belongs to Him, never demanded anything unreasonable. Some He has bidden to leave all and follow Him. Some He bids to go home to their friends, and there, within the circle of their own influence, declare what great things God has done for them. The way of the Cross, the way to Heaven, can never be the way of self-indulgence and self-pleasing, whether coarse or refined. It seems to me that a refined, self-pleasing, indulgent sentimentalism, with its pretty phrases, its exquisite propriety of emotion, with nothing endured, with nothing done, is one of the subtlest religious perils of the day. It is as the Son of God, come down from Heaven, that Christ said, "Believe on me"; but it is as the Son of Man, living a human life, that He said, "Follow me." He showed how men might live in the world, and yet not be of the world; or, in St. Paul's phrase, how they might use the world without abusing it, and make life a nobler, purer, and holier thing.[1]

4. Let us remember that Jesus was already girt for the great sacrifice. He was hastening to surrender Himself utterly to it. He who was rich had become poor and had humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross. The claims of the world and of wealth could scarcely find a place in His thoughts. Already He for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. And now the enthusiastic approach of the young ruler, most welcome to his Lord, is answered with this splendid opportunity of service. He may bring his devotion and his

[1] *Bishop Fraser's Lancashire Life*, 254.

longing after goodness into the service of the Saviour; he may go with Him as one of His chosen disciples to Jerusalem, and to the judgment-hall, and to Calvary, and find eternal life in thus following his Lord and in such fellowship with Him. Is not this the meaning of the Master's words—that He would fain have had this brave and earnest spirit as one of His chosen band? The word was that which was spoken to the disciples in Cæsarea Philippi when Jesus had first revealed to them that He must die, and it is recorded only once besides. If the young man had but seen the meaning of the words as the Saviour did, in the light of eternity, in the light of the glory of God, how sublime an offer it would have appeared, what trust and confidence it declared, what an opportunity for highest service it afforded!

¶ Have you ever seen those marble statues in some public square or garden, which art has so fashioned into a perennial fountain that through the lips or through the hands the clear water flows in a perpetual stream, on and on for ever; and the marble stands there—passive, cold,—making no effort to arrest the gliding water? It is so that Time flows through the hands of men—swift, never pausing till it has run itself out; and there is the man petrified into a marble sleep, not feeling what it is which is passing away for ever. It is just so that the destiny of nine men out of ten accomplishes itself, slipping away from them, aimless, useless, till it is too late. Now is a time, infinite in its value for eternity, which will never return again. Now—or Never. The treasures at your command are infinite. Treasures of time—treasures of youth—treasures of opportunity that grown-up men would sacrifice everything they have to possess. Oh for ten years of youth back again with the added experience of age! But it cannot be.[1]

III.

The Choice.

1. "He went away sorrowful." The completeness and immediateness of the collapse are noticeable. The young man seems to speak no word, and to take no time for reflection. He stands for a moment, as if stunned. The eager look passes from his face and the shadow of a great disappointment darkens his

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, ii. 289.

brow. For the first time he found his resources insufficient to secure the object of his desire. He discovered that there were some things which money, however plentiful, could not buy; that there were possessions which could not be inherited, but must be earned. He turned away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. The great testing had come, the clouds which portended a great storm had already gathered, and soon the placid bosom of the lake would be heaving and swelling under the stress and strain of a mighty tempest. He would never be the same man again. The depths of his nature had at last been stirred, and the effect of the storm must give him a deeper peace than he had ever known before, or intensify the unrest which he had already experienced.

2. He loved his comforts and his position better than he loved Christ. That is the whole state of the case. He did not oppose Christ. He was willing to consult Him. He was prepared to follow His advice to a certain extent. He recognized that He was a Teacher whom it would never do to argue with or scoff at. He owned Him a Teacher of the truth, but he could not obey Him; he did not love enough to follow Him; he was not fascinated by Christ. It is needless to say that, wherever such a comparative estimate of things spiritual and things worldly exists, the result must always be the same. Wherever a man is more concerned about his profits and his possessions than about his character, this will one day disastrously appear. Wherever love of Christ unsuccessfully competes with something inferior, this must one day show itself by the man cleaving to the inferior thing, and preferring to go with it.

¶ Tolstoy, the Russian socialist, has said that "the rich are willing to do anything and everything for the poor, except get off their backs!" Through a similar but universal perversity, the unconverted man is willing, more or less, to do anything and everything toward God that might lie in his power—heathen-like—except to yield Him real heart-friendship![1]

3. Henceforward he disappears from the gospel history; yet we are not forbidden to hope that the Saviour who loved him may have again repeated to him His command, "Follow me." The sorrow which he felt was, no doubt, real; and it may have been

[1] G. E. Faber.

so lasting as to make him reconsider the wisdom of his choice. And the times were coming when his nation was to pass through bitter trials, and when the wealth of many who trusted in riches was suddenly taken from them. In the ordinary course of nature this young man would have lived to see this time of great calamity for the Jewish people, and it may well have been that he who would not, of his own accord, give up all for Christ, may afterwards have suffered the loss of all things, and yet have found that it was love that sent the trial, and that the Lord was making good His promise to him of treasure in heaven.

In Dante's great poem there is a lost spirit without a name of whom he says, "I looked and saw the shade of him who through cowardice made the great refusal." And he places him among those whom he calls "hateful alike to God and to God's enemies." But was there not in that sorrowful and grieved departure a proof of nobleness? How many rich men of to-day, if summarily bidden to sell all their goods and give to the poor, would go away grieved and sorrowful? Would they not rather go away, like Naaman, in a rage, scornful that any could make so outrageous a proposal, and talking angrily about the importance of class distinctions? Was not that sorrow most of all at his own failure; at finding his own weakness? We can follow him in thought to a happier destiny than Dante has depicted. It may well be that he went up to the Passover, and there again saw the Christ of whom he thought so much—saw Him accursed and crucified. And, strengthened by that great example, he may have given to his risen Lord that service which he had shrunk from before. We can think of him as foremost among those of whom we read, "As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet."

"What lack you yet? A pathway, do you want,
Of noble struggle after perfect good?
A chance I give you: leave your cherished sphere
Of virtuous deeds; sell all and follow Me."
Think not this test a trial hard and stern,
Coldly applied by Christ to shame his pride:
No, 'twas a genuine offer, not bestowed
On many. Men were often sent away:

Not the relinquishment of outward wealth
The chief thing Christ required; but that the man,
Set free from earthly things, should then begin
A loftier career, beside Himself.
Think what this offer meant. Christ saw in him
High capabilities: His heart went out
To that young man. But it was not to be:
His weakness was revealed; before his eyes
Rose the heroic vision, and he saw
It was beyond his power. The record ends
With his discomfiture. He went away,
A sadder, wiser man. We know no more.

The Ministering Master.

LITERATURE.

Anderson (W. F.), in *Drew Sermons on the Golden Texts for 1910*, 199.
Banks (L. A.), *Sermons which have Won Souls*, 365.
Barry (A.), *The Atonement of Christ*, 39.
Benson (R. M.), *The Final Passover*, i. 50.
Black (H.), *Christ's Service of Love*, 23.
Burrows (H. W.), *Parochial Sermons*, 12.
Hackett (W. S.), *The Land of Your Sojournings*, 121.
Hall (E. H.), *Discourses*, 14.
Hallock (G. B. F.), *The Teaching of Jesus*, 145.
Holland (H. S.), *Logic and Life*, 225.
Hughes (H. P.), *Ethical Christianity*, 95.
MacDonald (G.), *A Dish of Orts*, 298.
Maclaren (A.), *Christ's Musts*, 55.
Marsh (F. E.), *Christ's Atonement*, 73.
Murray (W. H.), *The Fruits of the Spirit*, 441.
Rashdall (H.), *Doctrine and Development*, 128.
Ridgeway (C. T.), *The King and His Kingdom*, 50.
Robertson (A. T.), *Keywords in the Teaching of Jesus*, 41.
Smith (G. S.), *Victory over Sin and Death*, 28.
Wells (J.), *Christ in the Present Age*, 171.
Williams (W. W.), *Resources and Responsibilities*, 71.
Christian World Pulpit, xvii. 339 (A. Scott); xxiii. 82 (H. W. Beecher); xlix. 226 (L. Abbott); lii. 285 (C. J. Ridgeway).

The Ministering Master.

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Matt. xx. 28.

The whole scope of the teaching and example of Jesus from the beginning went to show that greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven is a different thing from that which is accounted greatness among men. The pagan ideal of life, the semi-barbaric and old Roman conception, finds the dignity and serviceableness of life in the influence of one man over another. From the days of Nimrod it has crowned the men of strong will. As Jesus said, They that wield authority over the nations have been hailed as their benefactors. In the form of military or physical mastership, or in the less brutal form of intellectual rule, rule by law, or the assertion of brain-power over feebler races and feebler men, this ideal of human life has played a great part in history and is destined still to play a great part. The ages of "blood and iron," of the domination of the strong over the weak, and of ruling over subject peoples, are not yet done.

The Christian ideal is the precise contrast. Christ came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; not to enrich Himself, either with nobler or with baser wealth, but to impoverish Himself that He might make many rich. With Him first, and with His followers in proportion as they actually do follow Him, self is subordinated into a minister to others; while the good of others and the honour of God in others' good become the end, the centre, the dominant and rewarding goal, towards which, in labour or in endurance, the whole life tends.

¶ Louis XIV., in his spirit of tyranny, could say, "I am the state." This was the pagan view. Frederick the Great, of Prussia, gave fine expression to the modern and Christian view in that noble utterance, "It is the business of the king to be the chief of the servants of the state!" This is the new standard, and has taken firm hold of the thought and life of Christian civilization, and to-

day, without argument, he is conceded to be the greatest who is greatest in service to the cause of human progress and the advancement of the Kingdom of God.[1]

I.

The Pattern of Service.

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

1. The Master here finds occasion to teach His disciples the profound lesson that the way to spiritual greatness is by service. It seemed an inversion of the ordinary rule by which princes exercise dominion and the world's great men exercise authority. For here it is the opposite—"whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." He takes Himself as an illustration of the law; for even the Son of Man "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The lesson is that we should follow in His steps, and make our religion not merely a getting but a giving, the service of Christ and of the brethren.

¶ The notion of rank in the world is like a pyramid; the higher you go up, the fewer there are who have to serve those above them, and who are served more than those underneath them. All who are under serve those who are above, until you come to the apex, and there stands some one who has to do no service, but whom all the others have to serve. Something like that is the notion of position, of social standing and rank. And if it be so in an intellectual way,—to say nothing of mere bodily service—if any man works to a position that others shall all look up to him and that he may have to look up to nobody, he has just put himself precisely into the same condition as the people of whom our Lord speaks,—as those who exercise dominion and authority,—and really he thinks it a fine thing to be served. But it is not so in the Kingdom of Heaven. The figure there is entirely reversed. As you may see a pyramid reflected in the water, just so, in a reversed way altogether, is the thing to be found in the Kingdom of God. It is in this way: the Son of Man lies at the inverted apex of the pyramid; He upholds, and serves, and ministers unto all, and they who would be high in His

[1] W. F. Anderson.

Kingdom must go near to Him at the bottom, to uphold and minister to all that they may or can uphold and minister unto.[1]

2. Now in order to appreciate the significance of that life of service, we must take into account the introductory words, "The Son of man came." They declare His pre-existence, His voluntary entrance into the conditions of humanity, and His denuding Himself of the glory which He had with the Father "before the world was." We shall never understand the Servant-Christ until we understand that He is the Eternal Son of the Father. His service began long before any of His acts of sympathetic and self-forgetting lowliness rendered help to the miserable here upon earth. His service began when He laid aside, not the garments of earth, but the vesture of the heavens, and girded Himself, not with the cincture woven in man's looms, but with the flesh of our humanity, and "being found in fashion as a man," bowed Himself to enter into the conditions of earth. This was the first, the chief, of all His acts of service, and the sanctity and awfulness of it run through the list of all His deeds and make them unspeakably great. It was much that His hands should heal, that His lips should comfort, that His heart should bleed with sympathy for sorrow. But it was more that He *had* hands to touch, lips to speak to human hearts, and the heart of a man and a brother to feel *with* as well as *for* us. "The Son of man came."

¶ Scientists tell us that, by the arrangement of particles of sand upon plates of glass, there can be made, as it were, perceptible to the eye, the sweetness of musical sounds; and each note when struck will fling the particles into varying forms of beauty. The life of Jesus Christ presents in shapes of loveliness and symmetry the else invisible music of a Divine love. He lets us see the rhythm of the Father's heart. The source from which His ministrations have flowed is the pure source of a perfect love. Ancient legends consolidated the sunbeams into the bright figure of the far-darting god of light. And so the sunbeams of the Divine love have, as it were, drawn themselves together and shaped themselves into the human form of the Son of Man who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.[2]

¶ Sir Walter Scott says that the most beautiful scenery in Scotland is where the Highlands and the Lowlands meet. Not in

[1] George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, 299.
[2] A. Maclaren, *Christ's Musts*, 57.

the Highlands, nor yet in the Lowlands, but at the meeting of the two. And it is as true in the spiritual kingdom, when the beaten track becomes the highway of God, and the heavenly places in Christ Jesus are connected with the common duties and everyday business of life.[1]

3. He *came* to minister. His service was to be utterly unstinted. He would go the whole length with it. He saw that we should demand from Him all that He had; that we should use up His very life; that our needs and necessities would press upon Him so sorely, so urgently, that He would spend Himself, and be spent, in this hard service; that we should never let Him stop, or stay, or rest, while we saw a chance of draining His succouring stores. He foresaw no light and easy giving, no grateful and pleasant ministry; He saw that it would cost Him His very life. And yet He came: even *that* He would lay down for our profit; even that He would surrender at our demands. And just because the work of the faithful service would indeed involve this surrender of life, which is the final and utter proof of all loyal and unselfish devotion, He had found it a joy and gladness to enter a world that would ask so much of Him. In this hope He came. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; yes, and so to minister, so to serve, that He would "give his life a ransom for many."

¶ Christ had always found His happiness and His honour in serving others and doing them good; but the supreme illustration of the principle on which He conducted His life was still to come —His final service was to consist in giving His life a ransom for many. This image of a ransom does not appeal to our minds as forcibly as it would to those of the disciples, because the experience of being ransomed, in the natural sense, is much rarer in modern than it was in ancient times. In the British Isles at present there do not probably exist a hundred persons who have ever been ransomed, whereas in the ancient world there would be such wherever two or three were met together. War was never a rare experience to the countrymen of Jesus, and in war the process of ransoming was occurring continually, when prisoners were exchanged for prisoners, or captives were released on the payment by themselves or their relatives of a sum of money. Similarly, slavery was a universal institution, and in connexion

[1] L. A. Banks.

with it the process of ransoming was common, when, for a price paid, slaves received their liberty. The Jews had, besides, numerous forms of ransoming peculiar to their own laws and customs. For example, the firstborn male of every household was, in theory, liable to be a priest, but was redeemed by a payment of so many shekels to the actual priesthood, which belonged exclusively to a single tribe. A person whose ox had gored a man to death was in theory guilty of murder, but was released from the liability to expiate his guilt with his life by a payment to the relatives of the dead man. Such cases show clearly what ransoming was: it was the deliverance of a person from some misery or liability through the payment, either by himself or by another on his behalf, of a sum of money or any other equivalent which the person in whose power he was might be willing to accept as a condition of his release. It was a triangular transaction, involving three parties—first the person to be ransomed, secondly the giver, and thirdly the receiver of the ransom.[1]

4. His life was a continued ministry. And it was such by its own necessity. Not as though He chose it should be so, as though He debated with Himself whether He would serve His fellow-men or not, go forth to meet persecution and contumely or lead a quiet and peaceful life, speak the truth that was in Him or withhold it; but simply because there was that in Him which must needs find expression, because feelings so deep and tender must assert themselves, because sympathies so broad and generous cannot confine themselves within the heart, because the great power of blessing or capacity of action is its own incentive to beneficence or action. He would not be ministered to. He saw too many souls about Him to be aided, too many sorrows to be comforted, too many doubts to be answered, too much spiritual darkness to be illumined, for Him to wait for others' ministering. To see such needs was to long to supply them. To feel within Him the power to serve was to put forth that power. To know the truth for which other souls were waiting was to utter it. To minister was the Divine necessity of His being. It was His soul's great prerogative, which could not be put aside.

¶ Some can be touched by personal sympathy; they have heart, but they cannot take a comprehensive view and embrace a noble cause—they fail in mind. Others have their imagination

[1] J. Stalker, *The Christology of Jesus*, 179.

fired by a cause, but they cannot sympathize with a wounded heart. We have narrow good men, and we have iron-hearted philanthropists. Christ takes in the tender heart and comprehensive thought—the person and the cause—the woman's way of looking at it and the man's. Or take another feature of it. He sympathizes with suffering and sorrow—a bruised heart; and He weeps over sin—a blinded heart. Christianity alone has set these two forth,—it is our glory and our duty—and in One Person; the tenderness of the human with the comprehensiveness of the Divine.[1]

5. The virtue of His costliest service extended to all. He says here "a ransom for many." Now that word is not used here in contradistinction to "all," nor in contradistinction to "few." It is distinctly employed as emphasizing the contrast between the single death and the wide extent of its benefits: and in terms which, rigidly taken, simply express indefiniteness, it expresses universality. "Many" is a vague word, and in it we see the dim crowds stretching away beyond vision, for whom that death was to be the means of salvation. The words of the text may have an allusion to words in the great prophecy in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, in which we read, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Calvin says, "The word 'many' here is not put definitely for a certain number, but for a large number, for the Saviour contrasts Himself with all the rest of mankind." The New Testament meaning of "many" is "all." "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Surely this means than all the sparrows. "If through the offence of one many be dead" (that is, all be dead), "much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "That he (the Son) might be the firstborn among many brethren"—that is, among all the brethren. In the ministry of His life He drew no distinctions; in the ministry of His death He encompasses the wide world. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." If in His life His ministry was, of necessity, confined within geographical bounds, on His cross He stretched out His hands, mighty to save, to the whole world.

¶ The word "ransom," though not rare in the Old Testament,

[1] J. Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 148.

is used in the New Testament, only in this context; and the English phrase, "a ransom for many," is not likely to be misunderstood. It means a ransom by means of which many are set free —from bondage, or captivity, or penalties, or sentence of death. But the Greek phrase might be misunderstood; "a ransom *instead* of many" might be thought to mean that many ought to have paid ransom, but that He paid it instead of them; which is not the meaning. And the indefinite "many" does not mean that there were some whom He did *not* intend to redeem; that He did not die for *all*. "Many" is in opposition to one; it was not for His own personal advantage that He sacrificed His life, but one life was a ransom for many lives. Here, where Christ for the first time reveals that His death is to benefit mankind, He does not reveal the whole truth. Compare 1 Tim. ii. 6 and 1 John ii. 2, where the more comprehensive truth is stated.[1]

¶ When prisoners were bartered at the conclusion of a war, the exchange was not always simply man for man. An officer was of more value than a common soldier, and several soldiers might be redeemed by the surrender of one officer. For a woman of high rank or extraordinary beauty a still greater number of prisoners might be exchanged; and by the giving up of a king's son many might be redeemed. So the sense of His own unique dignity and His peculiar relation to God is implied in the statement that Christ's life would redeem the lives of many. St. Paul expresses the truth still more boldly when he says that Jesus gave His life a ransom "for all"; but the two phrases come to the same thing; because the "many" spoken of by Jesus really include "all" who are willing to avail themselves of the opportunity.[2]

II.

The Obligation of Service.

"Even as the Son of man came."

1. He came as a servant, and He has the right to ask service of us. We must give Him what He asks; not only because reason says that His claim is just, not only because conscience tells us there can be no peace till we take up His yoke and follow in His steps, but also because we are bound to the King by ties

[1] A. Plummer.

[2] J. Stalker, *The Christology of Jesus*, 184.

of gratitude: "The love of Christ constraineth us, . . . that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again."

¶ Long ago Lord Wolseley wrote in his *Soldier's Pocket-Book* a sentence which deserves to live—"The officers must try to get killed." The matter could not be more conclusively put. Not in the battlefield alone, but everywhere and always, except among the few lost souls of whom men do not speak, has that great rule won simple unthinking obedience. Every physician goes by it to the haunt of contagion. John Richard Green wrote his beloved history when the pains of death gat hold upon him; Archbishop Temple's father made provision for his widow and family by taking a government appointment in a deadly climate and leaving them a pension after two years' service. Undistinguished men and women are spending their slender capital of health and life with but a plain idea of doing right by those they love, and with no talk of sacrifice. So vast and lovely are man's possibilities when he turns his face to Right—which is God![1]

2. The soul finds its life only in action, in going forth out of itself. Neither mind nor heart matures, however fine its training or abundant its resources, if it simply appropriates to itself, giving nothing out. Its strength and power come as it begins to react upon the world. Self-culture, however noble an aim, is never the noblest. Good for our earlier years, it must be replaced in later life by some great purpose beyond—the love of truth for its own sake, the desire for power, or the pure longing to serve humanity. Between the life spent in such intellectual pursuits as will simply gratify the tastes, stimulate the mind, or kill time, and the life spent in some actual service to society is all the distance between the dilettante and the man. The advantage of great qualities of mind or heart lies not half so much in what they directly bring to us as in the larger strength and capacity which we gain through their exercise. The more keenly we learn to realize others' wants and desires, as though they were our own, the wider the sympathies by which we act, the further away from ourselves our affections are turned, so much the larger and more vigorous does the soul become. The morbid nature, as you sometimes encounter it, at home only with its own griefs, or dwelling solely in its own past, or in love with its own fastidiousness, or finding nothing

[1] W. S. Hackett, *The Land of Your Sojournings*, 126.

beautiful save in its own tastes and nothing great or good save in its own ideals, or pursuing any thoughts which circle round and round the little centre of self, becomes the sure abode of weakness and discontent. Its egotism can end only in insufferable weariness and intellectual death.

3. In one of the most beautiful of his little poems, Whittier speaks about "the dear delight of doing good." He who has not tasted of that delight has been living upon the husks of things. They who spend their lives for others are ever living upon the royal wine of heaven. When God called Abraham to go into a far country He gave him a casket containing seven promises: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." "Thou shalt be a blessing"—this was the jewel in the casket. The man who has not tasted the luxury of being a blessing, who has not felt a vital personal relation to some good cause, and that he is of service to his fellow-men, has not yet sounded the deeps of life. This must have been in the mind of Browning when he spoke of "the wild joys of living."

¶ Dr. Henry van Dyke has given strong setting to this truth in his suggestive little poem, *The Toiling of Felix*. In 1897 a piece of papyrus leaf was found at Oxyrhynchus, near the Nile. It bore the fragments of several sayings supposed to be the lost sayings of our Lord. The clearest and most distinct was:

Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I.

Dr. van Dyke has made the historic incident the occasion of the writing of a very significant little poem which exalts the dignity of labour. Felix, a young Egyptian, very early in his life is mastered by a longing for a revelation of the Divine glory. In quest of it he goes to the libraries, takes down the volumes which contain the creeds, studies them long and patiently in hope that, while he studies, the Divine glory will burst from out the sacred page. But after weary months of experimenting he concludes that he has not adopted the right method.

Now he turns away from the libraries and frequents the

sacred temples where men are wont to gather for worship. In the early morning and in the evening twilight he becomes a suppliant before the throne of heaven, at the altar of many a sacred fane.

"Hear me, O thou mighty Master," from the altar step he cried;
"Let my one desire be granted, let my hope be satisfied!"

But after other weary months of seeking he is again disappointed.

Now he is told that yonder in the desert is a monastery, and in that monastery is an aged saint who has meditated long and patiently on the deepest problems of life; that once a year the aged saint comes from out his lonely dwelling and gives his blessing to the individual whom he happens to meet. Felix places himself at the outer wall. One morning he sees the gate open. He presents himself as a suppliant and entreats the blessing of the aged one, who looks at him earnestly but only in silence. He takes a token, however, from his garments and handing it to Felix retires within the monastery. Felix is again disappointed. But as he turns away it occurs to him that there may be something upon this token. He opens and reads:

Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I.

As he wonders what it all means he hears the echo of the hammers of the workmen who are engaged in quarrying out the stone in a stone quarry near at hand. Meantime an inner voice begins to plead with him and to suggest that he must become one of those workmen, and that by the rugged road of toil he will find his way to a vision of the Divine glory. The voice pleads so earnestly that at last he heeds it and presents himself, is accepted. and begins to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. At the end of the first day a new zest has come into his life. This grows on him as the days come and go. He is sure now he is on the right road. One day a fellow-workman is overcome by the burning rays of the noonday sun. In natural compassion Felix shelters his head with a palm leaf, and while doing so it seems to him he catches the vision of a face of wondrous beauty. Another day they are transporting some building material across a stream of water; the workman who stands by his side loses his footing and falls into the stream. In a moment Felix has plunged in after him. Firmly grappling him in one arm, he makes his way to shore with the other, and while he struggles toward the place

of safety it seems to him that he sees a form walking on the surface of the water like unto the Divine form of the Son of God. Thus he finds the way to a fellowship with his Lord that is deep and rich, sweet and glorious and divine.

The spirit or the teaching of the little poem is thus beautifully summed up by the author:

This is the gospel of labour—ring it ye bells of the kirk—
The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work.
This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn-cursed soil—
Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.[1]

[1] W. F. Anderson.

The Good and Faithful Servant.

LITERATURE.

Baker (O. C.), in *The Methodist Episcopal Pulpit*, 203
Brooks (P.), *Christ the Life and Light*, 222.
Dawson (W. J.), *The Reproach of Christ*, 37.
Farrar (F. W.), *Social and Present-Day Questions*, 254.
James (J. A.), *Sermons*, iii. 260.
Jordan (W. G.), *The Crown of Individuality*, 175.
Jowett (J. H.), *Meditations for Quiet Moments*, 98.
Llewellyn (D. J.), *The Forgotten Sheaf*, 99.
Matheson (G.), *The Joy of Jesus*, 5.
Moule (H. C. G.), *Thoughts for the Sundays of the Year*, 35.
„ „ *The Secret of the Presence*, 194.
Neale (J. M.), *Sermons Preached in Sackville College Chapel*, i. 301.
New (C.), *The Baptism of the Spirit*, 289.
Nicoll (W. R.), *Ten-Minute Sermons*, 115, 268.
Shannon (F. E.), *The Soul's Atlas*, 86.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, xxvi. (1880), No. 1541.
Vincent (M. R.), *God and Bread*, 117.
Christian World Pulpit, lxxiv. 373 (G. H. Morrison); lxxv. 391 (J. S. Robertson).
Expositor, 2nd Ser., vi. 204 (G. Matheson).

The Good and Faithful Servant.

Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—Matt. xxv. 21.

The plain ethical purpose of this parable is to teach the need for fidelity to duty in all human concerns. The great idea on which it is based is that man is the depositary of a great trust. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who went into a far country and left his property to be administered by his servants. We have all of us as children been puzzled by the unaccountable fact that God is unseen, and that the Governor of the universe seems to take no active part in its affairs. This is Christ's answer to the puzzle: God has delegated the administration of His world to His servant, man. In man there is a Divine capacity for truth, and duty, and righteousness: and still further to guide and strengthen that capacity in its development, God has given him a code of instructions, which goes by the name of the "Kingdom of Heaven." Obeying that code of moral law it is in the power of man to administer the world rightly as the vicegerent of God, and to develop his own highest self in the process. Time and talent—every form of human gift and opportunity—are part of the wealth of God which is invested in man, and the one business of man in this theatre of human life is to be a faithful steward of the trust reposed in him.

The Text defines—

I. The Life that Christ Approves.

II. The Rewards that Christ Dispenses.

I.

The Life that Christ Approves.

"Good and faithful servant." Here are the elements of a great life. Christ does not say a great life is brilliant. He does

not say a great life is splendid. He does not say a great life is illustrious. He does not say a great life is heroic. A great life is all these and more, but Christ does not say so. He simply says "good and faithful."

1. Goodness is a fundamental and essential element of Christian character. It is a household grace, adapted to every changing circumstance, and to every occasion. Some of the Christian graces seem not to enter into every act of life, but are called out in peculiar emergencies. Patience and resignation exhibit themselves only under the ills of life, or in the dark hour of adversity; but Christian goodness, from whatever position it is viewed, is equally conspicuous.

¶ There is one place where the difference between the good man and the bad man is hidden out of sight, and that is when both are kneeling at the foot of the Cross. But till men are brought there in repentance, the gulf which separates the desire to serve God from the disregard of His will is as wide as from heaven to hell. Nor can we do a greater mischief to our consciences than by trying to teach them that because we are weak therefore all Christian goodness is worth nothing, and there is little to choose between living one way and living the other way. On the contrary, weak as we are, we are expressly told that our goodness is in kind the same as our Lord's. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." The little good of which we are capable is for all that in its nature heavenly, and comes directly from the other world. Our weakness may make us incapable of attaining much of it: and our want of earnestness may rob us of still more. But still in its kind it is of heaven and not of earth, and nothing on earth can be compared with it in value. We cannot be as true and just and unselfish as we should be; and we are not as true and just and unselfish as we can be; but for all that, what truth and justice and unselfishness there is upon earth is of the same priceless heavenly quality as shall be found in the other world.[1]

(1) "Good" and "goodness" are used in different senses. We say that fruit is good, when it is agreeable to the sense of taste. An article of husbandry is good, when it is happily adapted to the purposes for which it was constructed. Goodness, as existing in the Deity, embraces that principle which leads the Divine Being

[1] Archbishop Temple.

to bestow blessings upon His creatures. Goodness, as applied to man, must be taken in a restricted sense; it refers to the moral qualities of his heart. It consists in the possession of the Christian graces. The Apostle has enumerated, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." The supposed possession of any one grace gives us no right to profess Christian goodness. The Apostle says, "Add," *lead up*, alluding to the chorus in the Grecian dance, where they danced with joined hands. The allusion is a beautiful one, showing the intimate connexion existing between the graces of the Spirit. Where one truly exists, they all exist, and nearly in the same strength and maturity. Christian goodness is necessarily associated with Christian holiness. It implies not merely a state in which the sympathies of human nature are easily excited, and lead to acts of kindness towards the bereaved and distressed, but a state in which fruit is shown unto holiness, and the end eternal life. It is not a mere negative state, in which there is no marked development of unsanctified nature, but the good man, like Barnabas, is full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. When the work of creation was completed, from the beauty and harmony of the parts, and their perfect adaptation to accomplish the Divine purposes, everything was pronounced to be very good. No higher appellation could be given. And man now becomes good only so far as, by the renewal of the Holy Ghost, he bears the impress of his original nature.

¶ In a letter to his youngest boy, James Hinton wrote: "If you haven't been perfect, you must not be discouraged, but must only try again and the more. And remember, the art is to *do at once*; delay is the great enemy. If you do at once what you are told, you can hardly imagine how beautifully everything will go. Only think of your ship; you see as soon as ever the wind says to it *go*, it *goes at once*. It doesn't wait a moment; and if it did, would it get on well, do you think? You know it wouldn't. Why, it would topple over, and its friend, the wind, in its very help, would only hurt. Now we ought to be like ships before the wind, and the wind should be love, moving us *at once*. Do you know, the Spirit, God's own Spirit, is called by the same word that means the wind? And I dare say one reason is that He fills the

sails, and that they yield freely and happily to Him, like ships before a favouring breeze."[1]

(2) In our ordinary interpretations of this parable, we are in some danger of laying the emphasis on *power* rather than on *character*. We say, "The servant made the best of his power, and the result was correspondingly large." We draw the practical lesson, "The more faithfully you use your talents, the more you will accomplish." We perhaps tend to forget that it is the moral quality of the user that gives character to the result; that a smaller result, as the outcome of faithfulness, is more in God's eyes than a larger one without it; that to God there is no large result, no good result, without goodness; that God demands interest on character no less than on endowment, and that interest on endowment counts for nothing without interest on character; that quality fixes the rate of interest on quantity. We may go into the other world with the reputation of great or brilliant or efficient men. It will count for nothing if we are not also *good* men.

¶ We have heard of the Roman who, to show that he could not be dispirited by fear, or intimidated by suffering, calmly placed his right hand upon the burning altar, and there steadily held it, without emotion, until it was consumed. We have heard also of the distinguished martyr of whom it was said, "In an unguarded and unhappy hour he had subscribed to doctrines which he did not believe; an act which he afterward deeply repented of, as the greatest miscarriage of his life. And when he was subsequently led to the stake, he stretched out the hand which had been the instrument in this false and discreditable subscription, and, without betraying, either by his countenance or motions, the least sign of weakness, or even of feeling, he held it in the flames till it was entirely consumed." In the one case we admire the man, in the other the moral principles of his heart. Though the acts were similar, the one showed the martial man, the other the good man.[2]

¶ With special clearness Dr. Martineau shows that, as the Greek proverb, which Emerson so aptly quotes, well put it, "The Dice of God are always loaded," and goodness must ever in the long run win the victory. It would be difficult to find in English literature a more perfect combination of depth of thought with beauty of expression than is presented in that section of

[1] *Life and Letters of James Hinton*, 215.
[2] O. C. Baker.

A Study of Religion, in which Dr. Martineau illustrates "The Triumphs of force in History," and shows how rude strength always gives way at length before intelligence; how intelligence, when it chiefly subserves the ends of pleasure or of gain, is sure to be worsted in the struggle with moral principle, and how in our present civilization the unobtrusive elements of Christian faith and love are gradually over-mastering all lower and coarser forces and tending to become, in the course of centuries, the dominating influence in the social and political life of humanity.[1]

2. Faithfulness imparts the quality which answers God's test of moral value; and value and award in the Kingdom of God turn upon quality, and not upon quantity. Faithfulness spans the differences of ability. No difference of endowment can put one out of reach of that test. It follows endowment down to its vanishing-point, and binds the possessor of an infinitesimal fraction of a talent to raise his fraction to the highest power as stringently as it binds the holder of five or ten talents. The servant with the smallest capital was condemned simply because he did not use it. On the other hand, endowment never rises out of the atmosphere of faithfulness. No measure of ability ever exempts from duty. No amount of brilliancy compensates for unfaithfulness.

¶ There is no lack of great works going on for our Lord to which we may safely attach ourselves, and in which our talent is rather used by the leaders of the work, invested for us, than left to our own discretion. Just as in the world there is such an endless variety of work needing to be done, that every one finds his niche, so there is no kind of ability that cannot be made use of in the Kingdom of Christ. The parable [of the talents] does not acknowledge any servants who have absolutely nothing; some have little as compared with others, but all have some capacity to forward the interests of the absent master. Is every one of us practically recognizing this—that there is a part of the work he is expected to do? He may seem to himself to have only one talent, that is not worth speaking about, but that one talent was given that it might be used, and if it be not used, there will be something lacking when reckoning is made which might and ought to have been forthcoming. Certainly there is something you can do, that is unquestionable; there is something that needs to be done which precisely you can do, something by doing which you

[1] *Life and Letters of James Martineau*, ii. 442.

will please Him whose pleasure in you will fill your nature with gladness. It *is* given to you to increase your Lord's goods.[1]

3. When we think of the world's great men, when we get to know them intimately in their lives, there is perhaps nothing so arresting as the fidelity which we discover there. When we are young we are ready to imagine that the great man must be free from common burdens; we think he has no need to plod as we do and face the weary drudgery daily; we picture him light-hearted and inspired, moving with ease where our poor feet are bleeding. In such terms we dream about the great in the days when we know little of them, but as knowledge widens we see how false that is. We see that at the back of everything is will. We come to see how every gift is squandered if it be not clinched with quiet fidelity, until at last we dimly recognize that the very keystone of the arch of genius is something different from all the gifts, that something which we call fidelity.

¶ One of the latest critics of Shakespeare, Professor Bradley, insists upon the faithfulness of Shakespeare. It is the fidelity of Shakespeare, in a mind of extraordinary power, he says, that has really made Shakespeare what he is. The same is true of Sir Walter Scott. It is written on every page of his journal. If there ever was a man who was faithful unto death, faithful to honour, to duty, to work, and to God, it was that hero who so loved his country, and died beside the murmur of the Tweed. Yes, one mark of all the greatest is a fidelity which is sublime. No gifts, no brilliance, no genius can release a man from being faithful. Not in the things we do but how we do them, not in fame but in fidelity, is the true test of a man's work, according to the teaching of our Lord.[2]

¶ On that great day when the nobility of England assembled in Westminster Abbey before the open tomb in which the body of David Livingstone was to be laid, all eyes were fixed on the quiet, black man, Jacob Wainwright, who stood at the head of the coffin. He was the Zanzibar servant who with his companions had brought his master's body back from the swamp in the heart of Africa where he died, and had delivered him to the representative of the Queen at the seacoast, and had asked as his sole recompense the privilege of attending the body until he could deliver it to his friends in the distant home. Now the service was completed;

[1] Marcus Dods, *The Parables of Our Lord*, i. 263.
[2] G. H. Morrison.

and as England arose to pay her tribute of honour to the heroic man who had given his life to close the open sore of the world, all eyes were turned to the faithful servant who stood at the head of his grave.[1]

II.

The Rewards that Christ Dispenses.

1. The first word of the Master is a word of recognition and approval—"Well done!" Fournier names his latest book, *Two New Worlds.* It is a study of the infra-world and the supra-world—a theory of the wonders of electrons and stars, a mathematical survey of the infinitesimal and the infinite. Now, here are two words that hold more wonders than two worlds. Here is the ultimate pronouncement of God and His universe upon the highest attainment of the human spirit. "Well done!"

¶ The God of the Holy Scriptures is characteristically generous in His moral estimates of His servants. He pronounces *perfect* and *good* men in whom we have no difficulty in seeing moral defect. The epithets are freely applied wherever there is single-hearted devotion to the cause of God—to a Moses, a David, a Job, a Barnabas. And those who serve the Lord of the Kingdom ought to bear this truth in mind. It is well that we think humbly of ourselves, but it is not well that we imagine that God thinks meanly of the best endeavours of His servants. It is injurious as towards Him, and it is degrading in its effect on our own character. Religion, to be an elevating influence, must be a worship of a generous, magnanimous God. Therefore, while in the language of a former parable we say of ourselves we are unprofitable servants, so disclaiming all self-righteous pretensions to merit, let us remember that we serve One who will pronounce on every single-hearted worker, be his position distinguished or obscure, or his success great or small, the honourable sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant."[2]

2. The faithful servant is given a larger sphere of power and influence. "I will set thee over many things." God's rewards are never arbitrary. They grow out of the struggle that we wage, as the fruit of autumn grows from the flower of spring. All

[1] H. A. Stimson, *The New Things of God*, 224.

[2] A. B. Bruce, *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, 213.

the rewards that we shall ever gain are with us in their rudiments already, just as the doom that awaits some in eternity is germinating in their heart this very hour. We see, in the light of that, why Christ associates faithfulness and rule: "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." It is because one is the outflow of the other, as is the burn of the spring among the heather. It is because, as flower from the bud, influence blossoms from fidelity.

¶ What is it to be faithful? It is to be full of faith. The man who has no faith is not faith full but faith empty. He is faithless. It is trusting God down to the end of the journey, through storm and sunshine, through adversity and prosperity, through good report and evil report, saying, even with the last breath, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." It is fidelity. It is being trustworthy as well as trustful. It is trusting God until men can trust me. It is being so loyal to duty, so devoted to truth, so steadfast to principle, that no lure of quick success can tempt me to be faithless. It means that I should rather be defeated than lie, that I should rather fail in business than succeed through dishonesty, that I should rather be broken in fortune and ruined in reputation than compromise my honour. And it is all this, not for a day or a year, or a decade, but for life, not merely when it pays but when it costs, not only when it is applauded but when it is hissed; it is "unto death."[1]

3. While the reward bears a direct relation to present fidelity, like all God's gifts it is exceeding abundant—"a few things," "many things." The greatness of God is that He asks so little and gives so much. A missionary left a few pages of the Gospel in an Indian village. Swifter than the arrows he shot from his bow, the message went straight to an Indian's heart. Meanwhile, the missionary had travelled on some two hundred miles. But the Indian measured the missionary's footprint, made him a fine pair of moccasins, tracked him over hill and valley until he found him, and gave him the tokens of his gratitude. God always takes the measure of His servant's footprint. And though he travel never so far and never so lonely, God will overtake him—no, not that, God will go with him, God will sing to him, God will cheer him, God will rest him, God will comfort him, God will richly reward him! God's remunerations are incalculable! For brass

[1] J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 227.

He gives gold, for iron He gives silver, for stones He gives iron, for a few things He gives many things!

¶ The bounty of the Lord gives enlarged opportunity for energy and usefulness. The "few things" of earth are to be replaced by "many things" which Divine grace provides for the faithful. The close of the earthly life, which seems as the yielding up at once of the capital and the gain procured by it, is followed by introduction into a new and grander order of things, in which larger possessions and wider opportunities are intrusted to each one. The greater power appears as a wider influence and rule under God's government. In the everlasting life procured for us by Jesus, a future is prepared for enlarged work and also for extended reward. In the heavenly kingdom, where righteousness reigns in man and extended favour comes from God, life is progressive in ever increasing ratio.[1]

4. The faithful servant is admitted into the Master's own joy. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

(1) What is the joy of God? As concerns us, one thing and only one—our goodness. Not our activity, not our intelligence, but to see us growing more and more like Himself, purer, truer, more loving—this is the sight in us that sends a new current of joy through the perfect happiness of the perfectly happy God. To reach by His grace, by His training, some new measure of His holiness, to recognize it and begin to use it and rejoice in it as His gift; to lift up our hearts with the same happiness as fills His heart when a new temptation is conquered and a new purity reached—this is to enter into the joy of our Lord.

¶ In one of His most beautiful parables, the Lord gives us a glimpse of one of His joys. A shepherd has lost a sheep. It has wandered on to the wilds, and has missed the flock. The good shepherd goes in search of it. He roams over the storm-swept, rain-beaten moors. He peers into precipitous ravines. He descends into valleys of shadow, where the wild beast has its lair. He trudges high and low, far and wide, gazing with strained vision, and at last he finds his sheep, maybe entangled in the prickly brushwood, or bruised and broken by the rocky boulders of some treacherous ravine. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulder, rejoicing." That is one of the joys of the Lord—the finding of the lost! "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Can we do it? Stay a moment. Let us follow the shepherd home.

[1] H. Calderwood, *The Parables of Our Lord*, 417.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." Could they do it? I know that they could come to his house, and sit down to the feast, and enjoy the good things provided, and fill the house with music and song. But could they really enter into his joy? Suppose that among his neighbours there were some who had been with him upon the wilds, who had dared the dangers of the heights and the terrors of the beasts, who had trudged with tired feet far into the chilly night—would not these be just the neighbours who would be able to enter into the shepherd's joy? To enter into the joy of finding, we must have entered into the pain of seeking. To enter into the joy of my Lord, I too must become "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."[1]

(2) A measure of joy accompanies all good and faithful work. "The doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Before the deed reaches completion a wave of heavenly satisfaction and joy breaks over the soul of the doer, which reveals the truth that man is in his element when doing good. Our conscience condemns us when we do an unkind action; we are pained when we fall below our ideal of true manhood; pain accompanies the dirty deed as inevitably as when the body receives a blow. The years, as they roll on, will cause us to lose many an object that we would fain keep, but they will not obliterate the memory of painful actions. "Verily we are guilty concerning our brother," said Joseph's brethren when they appeared before the ruler of Egypt. There was something, maybe, in the tone of the ruler's voice which reminded them of Joseph and of their own dastardly deed. Painful was the recollection and fearsome was the whispering of their guilt concerning their brother. On the other hand, our moral nature approves kindness in the glow of pleasure which begins within in the doing of the deed. The doer becomes conscious of the music of heaven as he goes along his way. The angels of heaven seem to him to be opening doors of pleasure and joy each step he takes, and voices ring out the Divine invitation, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Just to recollect His love,
Always true,
Always shining from above,
Always new;

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Meditations for Quiet Moments*, 99.

Just to recognize its light
All-enfolding,
Just to claim its present might,
All-upholding;
Just to know it as thine own,
That no power can take away—
Is not this enough alone
For the gladness of the day?

(3) The joy of the Lord is reserved in its fulness for the other life. Here His people fight the battle within themselves. With the great simplicity of revelation, St. James tells us the source of all disquiet, from the meanest brawl to world-shaking war: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of the lusts that war in your members?" The soul is without peace until the will rules every other power, and until that will is Christ within. The true kings unto God have known this so well that they have hardly asked for any other dominion.

¶ I cannot describe that joy. It is something to be experienced rather than described. As the rose defines the bush, as the music interprets the musician, as the pure face explains the pure heart behind it, so, in some such way, doth God's joy in the soul sing of the God who created the soul in His own image. I sometimes think that we have a hint of that joy when God and the soul understand each other in Christ. This picture from life may help us just here. There are in the parsonage two boys between five and six years of age. They are cousins; they are healthy; they are selfish; they are strenuous. You know the rest. The other night, after returning from a preaching engagement in a distant part of the city, I walked up to the bed on which the two lads lay, sound asleep. And the picture that met my eyes was so lovely that I walked away and back again for the third time. There they lay, cheek to cheek, heart to heart, hand in hand, even breathing in perfect unison, folded in the calm and sweet embrace of slumber. Long hours before, they had forgotten their scratched faces. Long hours before, they had forgotten the toys that caused so much misunderstanding. Long hours before, they had forgotten the unkind words they did not mean. Long hours before, they had forgotten their little heartaches and dried their childish tears. Long hours before, they had climbed the white, dreamful hills of sleep, where tearful eyes become tearless, where stormy words melt into peace, where broken toys and broken hearts are mended, where God's angels brood above restful pillows!

And so there is one place—more tranquil than childhood's sleep, more wonderful than childhood's dreams!—where our souls may find whiteness, where our minds may find unity and poise, where our hearts may find forgiveness, where our hot brows may find coolness. And that place is the bosom of Jesus Christ. In Him, through whom Jehovah is reconciling the world unto Himself, the soul and its God come to a perfect understanding. Then are set in motion those deepening currents of joy which will flood us at last into that infinite ocean named "the joy of thy Lord"![1]

[1] F. E. Shannon, *The Soul's Atlas*, 101.

Unto Me.

LITERATURE.

Burrell (D. J.), *The Verities of Jesus*, 82.
Butler (W. A.), *Sermons*, ii. 347.
Carroll (B. H.), in *The Southern Baptist Pulpit*, 54.
Darlow (T. H.), *The Upward Calling*, 217.
Dykes (J. O.), *Plain Words on Great Themes*, 159.
Eames (J.), *The Shattered Temple*, 79.
Ford (G. E.), in *Religion in Common Life*, 72.
French (E. A.), *God's Messages through Modern Doubt*, 75.
Hepher (C.), *The Self-Revelation of Jesus*, 54.
Holden (J. S.), *Redeeming Vision*, 86.
Jenkinson (A.), *A Modern Disciple*, 205.
Leach (C.), *Sermons to Working Men*, 24.
Lucas (H.), *At the Parting of the Ways*, 277.
Miller (J. R.), *A Help for the Common Days*, 31.
Parker (J.), *City Temple Pulpit*, ii. 22.
Parkhurst (C. H.), *Three Gates on a Side*, 157.
Pearson (A.), *The Claims of the Faith*, 53.
Service (J.), *Sermons*, 216.
Tyng (S. H.), *The People's Pulpit*, iii. 61.
Watts-Ditchfield (J. E.), *Fishers of Men*, 91.
Christian World Pulpit, xviii. 89 (J. H. Hollowell); xxiv. 337 (T. R. Evans); xxix. 259 (R. Veitch); lxxxi. 310 (L. G. Broughton).

Unto Me.

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.—Matt. xxv. 40.

1. Our Lord is here lifting the curtain of the Unseen. He is describing a great symbolic act of final judgment. The Throne of God is pictured, set upon the clouds; the nations are gathered before Him. The King is seated to judge in person. The issues of eternity depend upon His word. He will give sentence, with discernment that cannot err, of reward or punishment to every man according to his works. He calls no witnesses, for none are needed. The books that are opened, spoken of elsewhere, are but the universal memory of the Divine omniscience which this Judge brings to His work. Without hesitation, without the possibility of other than perfect justice, He divides, separating one from another to the right hand or to the left, and they that have done evil go, in that timeless existence which we call eternity, into punishment, but they that have done good into life.

2. The two earlier parables of judgment refer to those who are in confessed relationship with God. The parable of the Ten Virgins represents the relationship of friendship,—that of people who would share in the joys of God's home, as friends at a wedding feast; the parable of the Talents represents a less intimate relationship—that of service; the talents are committed to their proprietor's "own servants." Now the scene changes, and we are brought out to the larger world of the nations; the judgment of those who do not know Christ as their Friend or consciously serve Him as their Master is here typified.

I.

The Judge.

1. The Judge is "the Son of Man." The significance of that title is thus drawn out by Dr. Sanday: "The ideal of humanity, the representative of the human race. . . . Jesus did deliberately connect with His own Person such ideas as these. . . . This deeply significant title . . . at the centre is broadly based upon an infinite sense of brotherhood with toiling and struggling humanity, which He who most thoroughly accepted its conditions, was fittest also to save."

It is the conception which fits most closely to St. Paul's thought of Jesus as the Head of the race, the second life-giving "Adam," the consummation of humanity, in whom all that is human is gathered up, the new Father of the Race, for at His birth, perhaps by virtue of His birth of a virgin, there came into the stream of human life a fresh impulse of creative power, as some swift-flowing clear and wholesome stream pours itself into a sluggish and polluted river. He has bound humanity to Himself, and Himself to humanity, in His incarnation, multiplying the bonds of union in His love. None is so near akin to each of us as He, not even brother or child; therefore none is faint and weary among us, none is wrong or oppressed, but He feels the pain and the heartache. It is this first that gives truth to His words, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." He is the Son of Man because He stands in a unique relation to the human race.

¶ Not with people as social accidents have sorted them—as rich or poor, as wise or foolish, as lords and ladies or humble folk, has He that close affinity which makes Him call us all His "brethren"; but deep within these wrappings of rank or circumstance He who shares our nature reads the characteristic features of our manhood—common infirmity, common need, common pains, and common mortality. In these it was that He took part. In these, as often as He sees them, He still claims to have a share. Whatever sharpens in your bosom the sense that your neighbour is your brother-man must likewise sharpen the sense that he is a born brother to the Son of God. Is it not, then, due to this deep underlying unity of His nature with all our race, a race

which, sundered by many things, is one in its sorrows, that Jesus Christ bids us discern Himself in every man who hungers, bleeds, weeps, or dies? With that most human of all things, suffering, the badge, not of a tribe, but of our whole race, has He most completely identified Himself, who is Himself the Ideal Man and the Representative Sufferer for all mankind. "*Ye did it unto me!*"[1]

¶ Not long since, a lady stood on our southern coast and saw a dear sister drown. She could neither give help nor procure it; she could only stand still and suffer. And it is told to this day how they both died together, one in the sea, and the other on the land. As the remorseless current choked life in the one, grief palsied the heart of the other. Not a blow was struck, not a wave touched her feet, but that awful sympathy which links our souls became insufferable, and went to her heart as fatally as an assassin's steel.[2]

¶ The first evangelist, who delights to grace his narrative of the ministry of Jesus with citations from the Hebrew scriptures containing oracles that have at length found their fulfilment, bethinks himself of that weird description of the suffering servant of Jehovah in the writings of Isaiah, and the text which appears to him most apposite is: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Surely, indeed! The oracle is happily chosen. What strikes Matthew's mind is the *sympathy* with human suffering displayed in Christ's healings. He could easily have found other texts descriptive of the physical side of the phenomenon, *e.g.*, the familiar words of the 103rd Psalm, "who healeth all thy *diseases*." But it was the spiritual not the physical side of the matter that chiefly arrested his attention: therefore he wrote not "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by David, saying, who healeth all thy diseases," but "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases," translating for himself from the Hebrew to make the text better suit his purpose. The evangelist has penetrated to the heart of the matter, and speaks by a most genuine inspiration. For the really important thing was the sympathy displayed, that sympathy by which Jesus took upon Himself, as a burden to His heart, the sufferings of mankind. That was the thing of ideal significance, of perennial value, a gospel for all time. The acts of healing benefited the individual sufferers only, and the benefit passed away with themselves. But the sympathy has a meaning for us as well as for them. It is as valuable to-day as it was

[1] J. O. Dykes, *Plain Words on Great Themes*, 165.
[2] J. H. Hollowell.

eighteen centuries ago. Yea, it is of far greater value, for the gospel of Christ's sympathy has undergone developments of which the recipients of benefit in Capernaum little dreamed. Christ's compassion signified to them that He was a man to whom they might always take their sick friends with good hope of a cure. How much more it signifies to us! We see there the sin-bearer as well as the disease-bearer, the sympathetic High Priest of humanity who hath compassion on the ignorant, the erring, the morally frail; who, as a brother in temptation, is ever ready to succour the tempted, whose love to the sinful is as undying as Himself, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."[1]

2. The Son of Man is identified with us not only in nature but in condition. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." His design in coming here at all was to be a Healer, Rescuer, and a Comforter for mankind. To One who came forth from the unseen world of bliss on such an errand, the most suitable place and the most attractive would be the place where He was needed most. In His own language, the physician must go where the sick are to be found; and the sore, sad sickness under which humanity pines away to death is at once sin and the suffering which is sin's shadow. To get near enough to our stricken race that He might probe and know its misery, feel and bear its evil, and win the power at once to stanch its wounds and lift from it its whole burden, Jesus needed to become familiar with men in whom the malady had worked itself out to its painfullest consequences. Therefore "he bare our sicknesses and carried our sorrows." He became the companion of the unhappy, and the resort of outcast men and women and of the desperately sick whom no one else could save. It was on the shady side of life that He expected to find a welcome. The proud and prosperous are too well satisfied with the world and with themselves to make likely patients for a Divine Healer. Where people had drunk life's cup down to the bitter lees, and found at the bottom only failure, penury, sickness, and sorrow of heart, there He hoped to win a hearing for His soft and soothing call, "I will give you rest."

¶ What is this quality of sympathy which Jesus so constantly revealed? Certainly it is something more than amiable pity for distress. Such the priest and Levite might have felt, who never-

[1] A. B. Bruce, *The Galilean Gospel*, 130.

theless passed their wounded countryman on the other side. As its meaning teaches, sympathy is never indifferent. It is a "suffering with" the distressed. It is the "passion of doing good." It is the satisfaction of self in the helping of others. A reader of the woes of soldiers left to die on a battlefield knows the emotion of pity. It is a Florence Nightingale who sympathizes with them by nursing them back to life. One learns with regret and concern of the wretched lives of the lepers in the penal colonies in the south seas. It is a Father Damien who by his self-devotion and tireless labours, ending only in the common death of the afflicted ones, reveals what sympathy in its truest form can mean. Herein is seen the revelation of God's life in Christ. His is not the passionless and unsuffering life which the medieval saints loved to picture.[1]

3. The Judge is so identified with the moral law that He feels every violation of it as an outrage upon Himself. Dr. Dale of Birmingham used to say, "In God the moral law is alive." We may go further. This word of judgment, which we are now considering, is true only because *in Jesus the moral law is alive.* To resist His will is a synonym for sin. It is the nature of Christ which is outraged by every sin that is committed. Holiness is simply the will of Christ, and whenever we have put from us truth as we know it, or right as it called to us, whenever we have held down the good within us and given rein to the evil, it was Jesus who was there despised and rejected.

¶ Dora Greenwell, in her poem, *A Legend of Toulouse,* describes the act of wilful sin as the flinging of a dagger at the heart of God, in desperate revolt against the splendour of His holy nature.

A legend was it of a youth,
  Who as it then befell,
From out his evil soul the trace
Had blotted out of guiding grace,
  Abjured both heaven and hell;
That once unto a meadow fair,
  (Heaven shield the desperate!)
Impelled by some dark secret snare,
Repaired, and to the burning sky
Of summer noon flung up on high,

[1] H. L. Willett, *The Call of the Christ,* 167.

A dagger meant for God's own heart,
And spake unto himself apart
Words that make desolate.

The dagger that was meant for God found its mark in the heart of Christ; and in the blood from His wounds we are to see the appeal of God to the sinner for mercy, upon the cross, and in His crucifixion in the soul of the sinner.

There came from out the cloudless sky
A hand, the dagger's hilt
That caught, and then fell presently
Five drops, for mortal guilt
Christ's dear wounds once freely spilt:
And then a little leaf there fell
To that youth's foot through miracle—
A leaf whereon was plain
These words, these only words enwrit,
Enwritten not in vain,
Oh! miserere mei; then
A mourner, among mourning men,
A sinner, sinner slain
Through love and grace abounding, he
Sank down on lowly bended knee,
Looked up to heaven and cried,
"Have mercy, mercy, Lord, on me
For His dear sake, who on the tree
Shed forth those drops and died!"

II.

The Standard of Judgment.

The standard of judgment is intensely human and practical. It is no ecstatic rapture, no ritual observance, no external profession that is to be the test. It is plain humanity, a cup of cold water, a morsel of bread—social service, in a word. In this tremendously Divine word, with its sweep of authority so amazing, here is the kind of test most natural to man, as it is true to His own example.

1. The final test for every soul is its relation to Christ Himself. It does not seem to be so much a verdict passed by one

who has heard the evidence and sums it up impartially as a sentence which results from the touchstone of His presence. He implies that He—partly the word He has spoken, partly the works He has done, but essentially He Himself—is the standard by which men will be tried. In some of His sayings the idea of the Judge almost melts away, becomes an inappropriate image. Rather there appears simply the gracious Saviour of men, the only One who could really save them, and for that reason the only One who could really judge them. He is there, not only in the last day, but now always in the course of human history, in our midst, willing to save all who will accept His call, rejecting literally no one, but for that reason passing an unwilling verdict on those who will not come unto Him that they might have life. It seems to be in this sense that He regards His function of judgment as beginning from the time of His manifestation to men. And we almost gather that the scene of a judgment-bar, and the dramatic division of all mankind into two classes at one moment, is sketched for the sake of pictorial representation to the multitude, but that what fills the mind of Jesus is the intrinsic determination of men's destiny by contact with Himself in the field of human experience. Following up this suggestion, which comes more from a study of His modes of thought than from an accumulation of particular utterances, we arrive at the idea that He is the appointed Judge of all mankind for this reason: at the long last, when the ultimate destiny of every human being will be determined, the one factor which will be decisive must be the relation of each to Jesus.

¶ The place assigned in the last judgment to Himself in the words of Jesus is recognized by all interpreters to imply that the ultimate fate of men is to be determined by their relation to Him. He is the standard by which all shall be measured; and it is to Him as the Saviour that all who enter into eternal life will owe their felicity. But the description of Himself as Judge implies much more than this: it implies the consciousness of ability to estimate the deeds of men so exactly as to determine with unerring justice their everlasting state. How far beyond the reach of mere human nature such a claim is, it is easy to see. No human being knows another to the bottom; the most ordinary man is a mystery to the most penetrating of his fellow-creatures; the greatest of men would acknowledge that even in a child there

are heights which he cannot reach and depths which he cannot fathom. Who would venture to pronounce a final verdict on the character of a brother man, or to measure out his deserts for a single day? But Jesus ascribed to Himself the ability to determine for eternity the value of the whole life, as made up not only of its obvious acts but of its most secret experiences and its most subtle motives.[1]

Thou didst it not unto the least of these,
And in them hast not done it unto Me.
Thou wast as a princess rich and at ease—
Now sit in dust and howl for poverty.
Three times I stood beseeching at thy gate,
Three times I came to bless thy soul and save:
But now I come to judge for what I gave,
And now at length thy sorrow is too late.[2]

2. Christ interprets our relation to Himself by our conduct to the least of His brethren. We cannot spend our treasures as Mary did in ministering to the personal honour or refreshment of our Divine Lord. He is far withdrawn now beyond need or reach of human ministry into the serene heaven of His glory. But, though absent, He has left His proxies behind Him. No disciple may excuse himself to-day from imitating Mary's open-handed gratitude on the plea that the Saviour is out of reach. For every purpose of devotion—for giving Him pleasure, for testifying our own thanks, for winning in the end His praise—it is really all the same if we minister to His poor ones as if we spent our money on Himself. Through this appointed channel is our homage to reach Him there where, priest-like, He stands at the heart of this ailing race, a sharer in each man's sorrow.

This means that the face of every man and woman and little child we pass in the street—sin-scarred or careworn or tear-stained—must be to us as the very face of Christ. Behind that marred countenance, under that brutalized, besotted husk, lies hidden a beautiful brother, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Dare we think cheaply and contemptuously of the vilest man whom Christ loves, for whom Christ died? Since He is not ashamed to call them brethren, for His sake they are sacred

[1] J. Stalker, *The Christology of Jesus*, 241.
[2] Christina G. Rossetti, *Poetical Works*, 148.

and dear. The touch of His nature, the blood of His sacrifice, make the whole world kin.

¶ The people we know personally, the men we work with, the women we mix among, our own companions, our own servants, our own neighbours, have this imperious claim for ministration, whenever we grow aware of their need. Often they will not, or cannot, seek us out; it is for us to seek them out. They are perhaps prisoners of pride or reserve or shyness, and our sympathy must penetrate to them. The people who most deserve help will hardly ever bring themselves to ask for it. But it is love's instinct and prerogative to anticipate Christ's necessities before ever He makes a request.

I was hungry, and Thou feddest me;
Yea, Thou gavest drink to slake my thirst:
O Lord, what love gift can I offer Thee
Who hast loved me first?

Feed My hungry brethren for My sake;
Give them drink, for love of them and Me:
Love them as I loved thee, when Bread I brake
In pure love of thee.[1]

¶ Edward Irving caused it to be engraved on the silver plate of his London church, that when the offerings of the people no longer sufficed for the wants of God's poor, the sacred vessels were to be melted down to supply the deficiency. He was right. It is the Master's mind. Christ has expressly transferred to the honest and suffering poor His own claim on the devotion of His people. Even while He was warmly defending the action of Mary of Bethany on that Saturday evening, He hinted that after He was taken away from the reach of our personal homage the poor would remain with us in His stead. He made this still more plain on the following Wednesday. When, in the majestic passage before us, He foretold with dramatic vividness the awful transactions of the judgment, He made it for ever unmistakable that the enthusiastic love of the Church for her absent and inaccessible Lord is now to pour itself out in deeds of practical beneficence, finding in the distressed a substitute for Him who was once the Man of Sorrows.[2]

¶ The saying, "The poor ye have always with you," was literally true with Lord Ashley, and it remained true to the end

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Upward Calling*, 218.
[2] J. O. Dykes, *Plain Words on Great Themes*, 160.

of his life. The state of the weather, depression in trade, illness, bereavement, separation from children or friends—these and a hundred other things suggested to him no extraordinary cause of complaint as they affected himself personally, but they led him invariably to think how much more terrible similar circumstances must be to the poor and friendless. Nor did his sympathy exhaust itself in merely thinking about the poor and friendless. During the pauses in the greater labours which absorbed so much of his time, he would devise schemes for the relief of those within his reach, and would make the help he gave a thousandfold more acceptable by the manner in which he gave it. He was never too proud to grasp the hand of a poor honest man, or take up a sickly little child in his arms, or sit in the loathsome home of a poor starving needlewoman as she plied her needle. He never spoke down to their level, but sought to raise them up to his, and his kindly words were as helpful as his kindly deeds. The time had not yet come for that personal devotion to the welfare of the poor which distinguished his later years; that was only at this period occasional which afterwards became continual, but the principle that inspired it was the same; it was devotion to Him who had said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." To Lord Ashley, Christianity was nothing unless it was intensely practical.[1]

Look you to serve Me but above?
  Nay, rather serve Me here below;
Would you on Me heap out your love?
  On want and sin your love bestow;
Have I not said it? What you do
  To these, My poor, ye do to Me;
Whatever here I take from you
  Sevenfold returned to you shall be.
Doubt not if I am here; with eyes
  Of mercy know Me, wan and pale.
What! hear you not My anguished cries,
  My moans and sighs that never fail![2]

3. Our Lord sets their true value upon the unconscious services that we render to our fellow-men. "Ye did it unto me," even when ye knew it not. There is a holy art of anonymity, the giving and doing for His sake and for His eye alone, which is as beautiful as it is rare, and which imparts to those who have

[1] *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, 175.
[2] W. C. Bennett.

learned to practise it an inner peace and glory which nothing else can produce. It is this that determines the value and quality of every action—is it done for Christ and for His glory alone? Our debt to Him is payable at the bank of humanity's need, and He estimates at its eternal worth all that is done to alleviate that need, even though it be unattended with blare of trumpets and the limelight of self-advertisement. "By Him actions are weighed."

¶ It is said that when Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, returned to his native land with those wonderful works of art which have made his name immortal, chiselled in Italy with patient toil and glowing inspiration, the servants who unpacked the marbles scattered upon the ground the straw which was wrapped around them. The next summer flowers from the gardens of Rome were blooming in the streets of Copenhagen, from the seeds thus borne and planted by accident. While pursuing his glorious purpose, and leaving magnificent results in breathing marble, the artist was, at the same time, and unconsciously, scattering other beautiful things in his path to give cheer and gladness.

So Christ's lowly workers unconsciously bless the world. They come out every morning from the presence of God and go to their work, intent upon their daily tasks. All day long, as they toil, they drop gentle words from their lips, and scatter little seeds of kindness about them; and to-morrow flowers from the garden of God spring up in the dusty streets of earth and along the hard paths of toil on which their feet tread. The Lord knows them among all others to be His by the beauty and usefulness of their lives.[1]

¶ There is one motto which is more Christian than Mr. G. F. Watts' saying, "The utmost for the highest," and that is, "The utmost for the lowest." Life's biggest and bravest duties are, according to the teaching of Jesus, owed to "the least of these my brethren." While we are all applauding the sentiment that God helps those who help themselves, the one outstanding Christian teaching is that God helps those who cannot help themselves; and that when Christ thrust into the foreground of His programme the weak, the helpless, the morally, spiritually, and economically insolvent, and told an astonished world that the last should be first, the least should be greatest, and the lost should be found, He was "setting the pace" for all who aspire to follow Him.[2]

[1] J. R. Miller, *Glimpses Through Life's Windows*, 11.

[2] C. Silvester Horne, *Pulpit, Platform, and Parliament*, 81.

Wherever now a sorrow stands,
'Tis mine to heal His nail-torn hands.
In every lonely lane and street,
'Tis mine to wash His wounded feet—
'Tis mine to roll away the stone
And warm His heart against my own.
Here, here on earth I find it all—
The young archangels, white and tall,
The Golden City and the doors,
And all the shining of the floors!

The Blood of the Covenant.

LITERATURE.

Barry (A.), *The Atonement of Christ*, 59.
Brown (C. J.), *The Word of Life*, 86.
Hammond (J.), *The Forgiveness of Sins*, 91.
Hoare (J. G.), *The Foundation Stone of Christian Faith*, 199.
Horton (R. F.), *The Teaching of Jesus*, 109.
Ives (E. J.), *The Pledges of His Love*, 91.
Kuegele (F.), *Country Sermons*, New Ser., i. 109.
McGarvey (J. W.), *Sermons*, 56.
Maclaren (A.), *Expositions*: St. Matthew xviii.–xxviii., 243.
Moody (D. L.), *Sermons, Addresses, and Prayers*, 156.
Salmon (G.), *The Reign of Law*, 37.
Smith (D.), *The Feast of the Covenant*, 41.
Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, xxxiii. (1887), No. 1971.
Stewart (E. A.), *The City Pulpit*, iv. 25.
Vaughan (C. J.), *Liturgy and Worship of the Church of England*, 225.
Wheeler (W. C.), *Sermons and Addresses*, 138.
Church Times, July 2, 1909 (F. G. Irving).

The Blood of the Covenant.

This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.—Matt. xxvi. 28.

1. This verse is intensely interesting, because it contains one of our Lord's rare sayings about the purpose of His death. For the most part the New Testament teachings on that great theme come from the Apostles, who reflected on the event after it had passed into history, and had the light of the resurrection upon it. Still, it is not just to say that the Apostles originated the doctrine of the atonement. Not only is that doctrine foreshadowed in Isa. liii.; in the institution of His Supper our Lord also distinctly sets it forth. Before this He spoke of His life being given as a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28), and He called Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John x. 15).

2. In the institution of the Supper, Christ distinctly tells us in what aspect He would have that death remembered. Not as the tragic end of a noble career which might be hallowed by tears such as are shed over a martyr's ashes; not as the crowning proof of love; not as the supreme act of patient forgiveness; but as a death for us, in which, as by the blood of the sacrifice, is secured the remission of sins. And not only so, but the double symbol in the Lord's Supper—whilst in some respects the bread and wine speak the same truths, and certainly point to the same cross—has in each of its parts special lessons intrusted to it, and special truths to proclaim. The bread and the wine both say, "Remember Me and My death." Taken in conjunction they point to that death as violent; taken separately they each suggest various aspects of it, and of the blessings that will flow to us therefrom.

¶ It is said that old Dr. Alexander, of Princeton College, when a young student used to start out to preach, always gave him a piece of advice. The old man would stand with his grey locks and his venerable face and say, "Young man, make much of the

blood in your ministry." Now I have travelled considerably during the past few years, and never met a minister who made much of the blood and much of the atonement but God had blessed his ministry, and souls were born into the light by it. But a man who leaves it out—the moment he goes, his church falls to pieces like a rope of sand, and his preaching has been barren of good results.[1]

I.

The Covenant.

1. Christ speaks here of a covenant. Most religions presuppose some form of covenant with the object of their worship. The idea fills and dominates the Old Testament. And thus Christ found a ready point of attachment, a foundation of rock, on which He could build up His new order of truth. A covenant is a compact, an arrangement, an agreement, a contract between two persons or two parties, involving mutual privileges, conditions, obligations, promises. The Hebrew word appears to have the idea of cutting, and hence primitive contracts or covenants were made by the shedding of blood or the sacrifice of an animal.

2. After God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He entered into a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. A covenant is an agreement betwixt two, securing on a certain condition a certain advantage. The advantage under the covenant at Mount Sinai was that the Lord should be their God and they His people; and the condition was that they should observe His Law. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgements: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do."

But the children of Israel proved unfaithful. In the pathetic language of Scripture, "they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so." And therefore the covenant was cancelled. "They rebelled, and grieved his

[1] D. L. Moody, *Sermons, Addresses, and Prayers*, 161.

Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy." He abandoned them to the lust of their hearts, and they suffered disaster after disaster till they were stricken with the final blow, the Babylonian Captivity, and laid in the very dust.

But that was not the end.

> What began best, can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

His heart still yearned for them. "He remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people." He could not let them go, and He turned to them in their misery. He raised up a prophet in their midst, and charged him with a message of hope. They had broken the first covenant, but He would grant them a fresh opportunity and enter into a new and better covenant with them. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

¶ Is it not a grand thought that between us and the infinite Divine nature there is established a firm and unmovable agreement? Then He has revealed His purposes; we are not left to grope in darkness, at the mercy of "peradventures" and "probablies"; nor reduced to consult the ambiguous oracles of nature or of Providence, or the varying voices of our own hearts, or painfully and dubiously to construct more or less strong bases for confidence in a loving God out of such hints and fragments of revelation as these supply. He has come out of His darkness, and spoken articulate words, plain words, faithful words, which bind Him to a distinctly defined course of action. Across the great ocean of possible modes of action for a Divine nature He

has, if I may say so, buoyed out for Himself a channel, so that we know His path, which is in the deep waters. He has limited Himself by the utterance of a faithful word, and we can now come to Him with His own promise, and cast it down before Him, and say, "Thou hast spoken, and Thou art bound to fulfil it." We have a covenant wherein God has shown us His hand, has told us what He is going to do and has thereby pledged Himself to its performance.[1]

3. This new covenant was to be, so the tremendous promise runs on, a spiritual one, an experimental and universal knowledge of God, a covenant of pardon, complete and sure. Jeremiah was allowed to see the covenant only as Moses saw the promised land from Pisgah. He never saw it realized, but he knew that every promise of God is an oath and a covenant. For he had learnt in the shocks and changes of his life the unfailing pity of Him with whom he had been privileged to have fellowship and to hold "dialogues." The old agreement was, "If ye will obey my voice and do my commandments, then"—so and so will happen. The old condition was, "Do and live; be righteous and blessed!" The new condition is, "Take and have; believe and live!" The one was law, the other is gift; the one was retribution, the other is forgiveness. One was outward, hard, rigid law, fitly "graven with a pen of iron on the rocks for ever"; the other is impulse, love, a power bestowed that will make us obedient; and the sole condition that we have to render is the condition of humble and believing acceptance of the Divine gift. The new covenant, in the exuberant fulness of its mercy, and in the tenderness of its gracious purposes, is at once the completion and the antithesis of the ancient covenant with its precepts and its retribution.

This glad era was ushered in by the Lord Jesus Christ, "the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises"; and, since it was necessary that a covenant should be ratified by a sacrifice, He, the true Paschal Lamb, at once Victim and Priest, sealed the new covenant with His own precious blood. Thus it was that He interpreted His Death in the Upper Room. "He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins."

[1] A. Maclaren.

¶ The covenant is explicitly declared to be founded on Christ's expiatory death, and to be received by the partaking of His body and blood. This importance of the person and work of Jesus, both for the inauguration and the reception of the covenant, agrees with the view that the covenant designates the present, provisional blessedness of believers, for this stage is specifically controlled and determined by the activity of Christ, so that St. Paul calls it the Kingdom of Christ in distinction from the Kingdom of God, which is the final state. The Covenant idea shares with the ideas of the Church this reference to the present earthly form of possession of the Messianic blessings, and this dependence on the person and work of the Messiah (cf. Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17). The difference is that in the conception of the Church, the organization of believers into one body outwardly, as well as their spiritual union inwardly, and the communication of a higher life through the Spirit stand in the foreground, neither of which is reflected upon in the idea of the Covenant. The Covenant stands for that central, Godward aspect of the state of salvation, in which it means the atonement of sin and the full enjoyment of fellowship with God through the appropriation of this atonement in Christ.[1]

II.

The Sealing Blood.

1. Christ regards His own blood as the seal and confirmation of the covenant. Covenants were ratified in different ways; sometimes, for instance, the contracting parties were held to be bound by eating salt together; sometimes by partaking together of a sacrificial meal; sometimes by passing between the divided pieces of slaughtered animals; and especially by the use, still prevalent in many parts of the world, of blood, as by each of the parties tasting each other's blood, or smearing himself with it, or letting it be mingled with his own, etc., or by both jointly dipping their hands in the blood of the slaughtered animal. The idea, therefore, of a covenant in blood would not appear strange and new to the Apostles, or occur to them as repugnant, as it does to the minds of men of the Western modern civilization. To us, however far from the ideal we fall, and whatever compromises

[1] Geerhardus Vos, in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, i. 380.

we adopt, we know our word ought to be our bond, our "yea" yea, and our "nay" nay. We have our stamped contracts because the ideal is still beyond the powers of human nature at large. But in the early days the shedding of blood was a form of ratification which no other emphasis could equal. It united, it "at-one-d," the parties concerned with a firmness which no verbal agreement could accomplish.

Jeremiah's reference to Sinai bids us turn to that wonderful scene where the high mountains formed the pillars and walls of a natural temple, and where the first covenant was ratified with abundance of sacrificial blood. Moses, we are told, read the Book of the Covenant in the ears of the people; and, taking the blood, sprinkled half of it upon the altar with the twelve pillars and half upon the people. The law was thus given with a covenant of blood. God thus bound the nation to Himself. He had offered great blessings if the people would keep the words of His law; His people had responded: "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do."

Now it is impossible to suppose that Christ had no reference to the promises made through Jeremiah, and, through them, to the scene at Sinai. His Apostles, at least, so understood His words, "the new covenant in my blood." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls Him the new Moses, mediating a better covenant, founded on better promises. The cross was in His view, though none of His disciples saw it, in the Upper Room. But He saw that His blood was to be the sacrificial blood in which the "new covenant" was to be sealed, confirmed, ratified. He was inaugurating a "new people," and was to lead them forth out of the Egypt of sin and alienation into the Promised Land of holiness and the fellowship of God. He was to be the leader of a new emigration from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and love. The bonds broken under the old covenant were to be reknit under the new covenant. The cup is the pledge, the symbol, of that new bond. And every time we drink the cup we are renewing the covenant which God has offered to all men in and through Christ.

¶ When the Greeks and the Trojans called a truce pending the single combat between Menelaos and Paris, they ratified it by a sacrifice.

He spake, and the throats of the lambs with pitiless blade he severed,
And laid them low on the earth all quivering and gasping
For lack of vital breath; for the blade their strength had stolen.
And anon from the mixing-bowl they drew the wine in goblets,
And poured it forth and prayed to the gods that live for ever.
And thus said one and another among the Achæans and Trojans:
"Whiche'er of us, breaking the oaths, may do harm unto the others,
Their brains on the ground be scattered e'en as this wine is outpourèd—
Theirs and their sons'—and their wives be a prize unto others."

The custom was universal. The heathen observed it, and so did Israel. Thus it is written: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."[1]

2. Christ's death was the consummation of His infinite sacrifice, the further reach of His redeeming Love. When He had yielded His life in steadfast devotion to the Father's honour and patient travail for the souls of men, what more was possible? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The cross is our Lord's divinest glory; "for this," says Clement of Alexandria, "is the greatest and kingliest work of God—to save mankind."

His death was not an isolated event. It did not stand alone. It was the consummation of His life, the crown of His ministry, the completion of His redemption. When the New Testament speaks of His death, it means not simply His crucifixion on Calvary, but all that led up to that supreme crisis—His steadfast obedience to the Father's will, which continued all the days of His flesh and found its ultimate expression when, with the cross before Him, He said, "Not my will, but thine, be done," and so freely gave Himself into the hands of wicked men to be mocked

[1] D. Smith, *The Feast of the Covenant*, 41.

and tortured and slain. His entire life was sacrificial—a truth which St. Paul expresses when he says, "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming *obedient even unto death*, yea, the death of the cross."

¶ Here is a fundamental truth, essential to a just appreciation of our Lord's redeeming work; and in these moving lines the poet has perceived what theologians have too often missed:

> Very dear the Cross of shame
> Where He took the sinner's blame,
> And the tomb wherein the Saviour lay,
> Until the third day came;
> Yet He bore the self-same load,
> And He went the same high road,
> When the carpenter of Nazareth
> Made common things for God.

A life of loving and constant obedience—this is God's requirement. This it is that we have failed to render; and His doing on our behalf what we have failed to do is our Blessed Lord's Atonement for the sin of the world.[1]

III.

The Remission Secured by the Sealed Covenant.

1. "Shed for many unto remission of sins." Remission literally means "to throw back, or throw away," and the term is used simply because, when God forgives our sins, He is contemplated as throwing them away, tossing them clear off, outside of all subsequent thought or concern in regard to them. There is another expression used in Scripture for the same thought, which is also figurative. "Repent and turn," says Peter, "that your sins may be *blotted out*." They are contemplated in that expression as having been written down in some book of God's remembrance, as it were, and God in forgiving them is figuratively represented as blotting out that writing. And blotting out with the ancients was a little more complete than it is, usually, with us. When we write something down with ink, and blot it out, there still remain some marks to indicate that once there was writing there. If

[1] D. Smith, *The Feast of the Covenant*, 52.

you write on a slate and rub it out, some marks are often left. The ancients used a wax tablet. Take one of our common slates and fill it with wax even with the frame, and you will have an ancient wax tablet. A sharp-pointed instrument made the marks in the wax, and when they wished to blot it out, they turned the flat end of the stylus and rubbed it over, and there was an absolute erasure of every mark that had been made. That is the figure, then, used by Peter for the forgiveness of sins—indicating that when God forgives sins, they are not only thrown away, as in the expression remission, but they are blotted out—the last trace of them being gone, and gone for ever.

From morn to eve they struggled—Life and Death,
  At first it seemed to me that they in mirth
  Contended, and as foes of equal worth,
So firm their feet, so undisturbed their breath.
But when the sharp red sun cut through its sheath
  Of western clouds, I saw the brown arm's girth
  Tighten and bear that radiant form to earth,
And suddenly both fell upon the heath.

And then the wonder came; for when I fled
  To where those great antagonists down fell,
  I could not find the body that I sought,
  And when and where it went I could not tell;
  One only form was left of those who fought,
The long dark form of Death—and it was dead.[1]

2. But, it may be asked, how does our Lord's life of "obedience even unto death" avail for us? It was His own life, and how is it linked on to our lives? What is the nexus between it and them? View it as the sacrifice which ratified the New Covenant. It is the covenant that links our lives to His. Remember what the sacrifice at Mount Sinai signified. The victim was presented in the name of the people; and the offering of its life at the altar was symbolic of the surrender of their lives to God. And even so Jesus is our Representative. He is the second Head of humanity, and as, by the operation of those mysterious laws which link the generations, the entail of Adam's sin is the heritage of his children, so in like manner the righteousness of Jesus touches

[1] Cosmo Monkhouse.

us too. He lived His life and died His death in our name and on our behalf; and, that we may enter into the covenant and appropriate its benefits, we have only to acknowledge Him as our Representative and say Amen to all that He did and all that He was. We have only to approach the throne of mercy in our sinfulness and weakness and point to that holy life laid, in perfect devotion to the Father's will, on the altar of Calvary, making it our offering and presenting it before God as the life which we fain would live and by His grace shall live. And thus we lay our sins on Jesus, the spotless lamb of God, and, making His sacrifice our formula at once of confession and of consecration, win by it acceptance and peace.

In all nations beyond the limits of Israel, the sacrifices of living victims spoke not only of surrender and dependence, but likewise of the consciousness of demerit and evil on the part of the offerers, and were at once a confession of sin, a prayer for pardon, and a propitiation of an offended God. And the sacrifices in Israel were intended and adapted not only to meet the deep-felt want of human nature, common to them as to all other tribes, but also were intended and adapted to point onwards to Him in whose death a real want of mankind was met, in whose death a real sacrifice was offered, in whose death an angry God was not indeed propitiated, but in whose death the loving Father of our souls Himself provided the Lamb for the offering, without which, for reasons deeper than we can wholly fathom, it was impossible that sin should be remitted.

¶ Let me mention here a circumstance in the last days of the distinguished Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, who, at an extreme age, but in full possession of all his rare mental powers, was brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. He said, "I never used to be able to understand what these good people meant when they spoke so much of the *blood*, the *blood*. But I understand it now; it's just Substitution!" Ay, that is it, in one word, Substitution—"my blood shed for many for the remission of sins,"—Christ's blood instead of ours,—Christ's death for our eternal death,—Christ "made a curse, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law." Once in conversation, my beloved friend, Dr. Duncan, expressed it thus in his terse way, "A religion of blood is God's appointed religion for a sinner, for the wages of sin is death."[1]

[1] C. J. Brown, *The Word of Life*, 94.

3. Theology has long laboured to explain the death of Christ on the theory that God, not man, was the problem: God's anger rather than man's cleaving to his sin. God was thought of as caring supremely for His outraged law, as indeed being bound by His law, as though law were a Divine Being with independent rights and a claim to compensation, as though a father could love a rule more than his own child. The difficulty lies in what we have made of ourselves. God's task is not to overcome His own resentment and say "I forgive," but to forgive so as to heal us of our self-inflicted wounds, to inspire us to forgive ourselves, to trust and hope for ourselves by trusting and hoping in His eternal love and patience. His forgiveness is not a word, or an act, but a self-communication. God Himself is the Atonement. "He is the propitiation for our sins." We may have done badly, shamefully. Good men may condemn us, suspect and distrust us, justly, for we condemn and distrust ourselves. But One believes in us and for us, hopes for us. God in Christ stands by the soul forsaken of all others. We "were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, . . . but with precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ."

¶ No one that has ever read Tennyson's *Guinevere* can have forgotten the great forgiveness scene with which it closes. The guilty wife lies prostrate at her husband's feet, and grovels with her face against the floor. "Lo! I forgive thee as Eternal God forgives," said Arthur. "Do thou for thine own soul the rest." Ah! but one who forgives like God should do and say something more. A husband mediating God's forgiveness should show himself able to trust a wife that can no longer trust herself, love one that loathes herself, hope for one that can only despair for herself. So the atoning love of God takes hold of Arthur, and he pours the ointment of love on the golden hair that lies so low, and he pours hope like oil into the dark soul and lights the promise of future days:

> "Hereafter in that world where all are pure
> We two may meet before high God, and thou
> Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
> I am thine husband."
>
> And while she grovell'd at his feet,
> She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
> And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
> Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Does not the human truth of that come to you? Do you not see that beyond the wrong done to Arthur was the wrong done to herself? The task of forgiveness was not to slake the king's wrath, but to redeem the queen's soul and cure her of being the thing she had made of herself.[1]

4. The blood speaks of a life infused. "The blood is the life," says the physiology of the Hebrews. The blood is the life, and when men drink of that cup they symbolize the fact that Christ's own life and spirit are imparted to them that love Him. "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." The very heart of Christ's gift to us is the gift of His own very life to be the life of our lives. In deep, mystical reality He Himself passes into our being, and the "law of the spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death," so that we may say, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," and the humble believing soul may rejoice in this; "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is, in one aspect, the very deepest meaning of this Communion rite. As physicians sometimes tried to restore life to an almost dead man by the transfusion into his shrunken veins of the fresh warm blood from a young and healthy subject, so into our fevered life, into our corrupted blood, there is poured the full tide of the pure and perfect life of Jesus Christ Himself, and we live, not by our own power, or for our own will, or in obedience to our own caprices, but by Him and in Him, and with Him and for Him. This is the heart of Christianity—the possession within us of the life, the immortal life, of Him who died for us.

¶ Whatever life had anywhere been found and lost, whatever life had never been found, was given to man in Christ. It may be that this or that portion of the vast inheritance of life has never as yet been claimed, or has been but doubtfully claimed, because faith in Him has been too petty or wilful in its scope as well as too feeble in its energy. But in Christ life was given in its fulness nevertheless, and in that due subordination which alone secures that nothing be lost. This is the one character of the Gospel which takes precedence of all others; its many partial messages are unfoldings of its primary message of life. Salvation according to Scripture is nothing less than the preservation, restoration, or exaltation of life: while nothing that partakes or can partake of

[1] J. M. Gibbon.

life is excluded from its scope; and as is the measure, grade, and perfection of life, such is the measure, grade, and perfection of salvation.[1]

5. "Shed for many." The terms of the covenant are comprehensive. The cup commemorates the supreme moment when the barrier between God and man was swept away, and the access to communion with God was opened by "a new and living way." It bids all men remember that the Divine life and love are free for all who will receive them. Whosoever will may come and enter into the covenant of God in Christ. None are excluded save those who exclude themselves. Here is our comfort. Salvation does not rest on our goodness of character or on our worthiness of conduct, but on the covenant relationship in Christ. Such an immense debt will prevent us from taking liberties with our life, and will continually inspire in us a devotion to serve as our talents allow and our opportunities permit.

¶ Jesus died *to bring in the Kingdom of God.* That is one thing we can be sure of. Now, *what* was this Kingdom of God as conceived by Him? Subjectively considered, it was the reign of God in men's hearts, and to establish it thus involved the bringing of men to God, so that His Spirit should possess their hearts and they be made the true children and heirs of God. The Cross was meant to be effectual for this. Its aim was ethical, and nothing short of that which would lead to an ethical Salvation would be the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom had also an *objective* aspect. As such, it was the Kingdom of God's *Grace*; it was something that should come from God as His great gift to men; it was the drawing nigh of God to the sinful, and as yet unrepentant, world, with the proclamation of Forgiveness, nay, with the assurance of it as the foundation of a solemn Covenant made with men; and it was only through the coming of the Kingdom in this objective way that it could come effectually, or, in its power, subjectively. Christ therefore intended that His Cross should bring to men the assurance of the Divine Forgiveness. . . . The Divine Forgiveness or Remission of Sins that comes to men through the Cross is not the Forgiveness of individual sinners on their Repentance (which was always open to men), but the Forgiveness of God going forth *to the whole sinful world*, in order to lead men to Repentance and to make them

[1] F. J. A. Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, 100.

members of God's Kingdom. It comes as the proclamation of a Divine amnesty to men, but it is of no avail unless it is accepted by them so as to make them loyal members of the Kingdom, and followers of that Righteousness which alone can give final entrance into it.[1]

[1] W. L. Walker, *The Cross and The Kingdom*, 241.

Christ's Parting Charge.

LITERATURE.

Broughton (L. G.), *Table Talks of Jesus*, 96.
Brown (C.), *The Message of God*, 46.
Brown (H. D.), *Christ's Divinity School*, 68.
Campbell (R. J.), *New Theology Sermons*, 50.
Cross (J.), *Old Wine and New*, 185.
Dyke (H. van), *The Open Door*, 85.
Fremantle (W. H.), *The Gospel of the Secular Life*, 91.
Greenhough (J. G.), *Christian Festivals and Anniversaries*, 123.
Ingram (A. F. W.), *The Gospel in Action*, 45.
John (Griffith), *A Voice from China*, 38.
Liddon (H. P.), *Easter in St. Paul's*, 393.
Morgan (G. C.), *The Missionary Manifesto*, 29.
Moule (H. C. G.), *Christ's Witness to the Life to Come*, 135.
Newman (C. E.), *The Bible in the Pulpit*, 225.
Simpson (J. G.), *Christian Ideals*, 309.
Smellie (A.), *In the Secret Place*, 3.
Stubbs (C. W.), *Christus Imperator*, 18.
Terry (G. F.), *The Old Theology in the New Age*, 119.
Vaughan (C. J.), *University Sermons*, 233.
Virgin (S. H.), *Spiritual Sanity*, 47.
Welldon (J. E. C.), *The Fire upon the Altar*, 54.
Cambridge Review, xx., Supplement No. 510 (F. H. Chase).
Christian World Pulpit, viii. 100 (H. W. Beecher); xliii. 300 (R. Rainy); lv. 248 (C. Gore); lxviii. 67 (J. Foster); lxxi. 309 (C. Brown).
Churchman's Pulpit: Pt. 82, Mission Work, 183 (W. Leitch).
Record of Christian Work, xxxii. (1913) 439 (J. H. Jowett).

CHRIST'S PARTING CHARGE.

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

1. IN Galilee as in Jerusalem the Risen Saviour manifested Himself to the representatives of His universal Church. The brief summary of the history which St. Matthew gives calls up before our eyes a scene of singular majesty and awe. The time we are not told; we may conjecture that it was again a Lord's Day, the day which even then was becoming hallowed as the weekly memorial of the resurrection, the birthday of the Lord into the new life, and the birthday of His people in Him. The place is "the mountain"—the mountain of the Beatitudes, or the mountain where once He had fed the crowds. The occasion differs from all those which had gone before. At other times He had appeared at most to a handful of His followers. Now, if we may interpret the hint of the Evangelist by the statement of St. Paul, there were with the Eleven five hundred of the brethren. At other times He had come suddenly and unexpectedly. Now the place is of His appointment, the meeting of the disciples by His command. It is, to use a phrase of the Epistles, the first Christian Ecclesia—the conscious gathering of those who belong to Him into His presence as the one centre and secret of their common life. He comes not suddenly, as before, but as a looked for friend approaching from the distance.

When the Eleven saw Him, they, assured now of His resurrection, "worshipped him." But "the others"—the greater part, it may be, of the waiting multitude, who as yet had not themselves seen—"the others doubted." They had expected, we may con-

jecture, to behold clear tokens of unearthly majesty, signs which should have compelled belief; and lo, it was "the same Jesus" whom they had loved and followed in earlier days who was now drawing nigh. "The others doubted." They had all obeyed their Master's call; they were all true to the instincts of sacred fellowship. But they had not all attained to the same measure of faith. They could not all bear the test of a spiritual crisis. They could not all at once give the Lord the glad welcome of an unquestioning worship. The fact of their doubt is recorded, but the Evangelist does not stay to give the details of the sequel. Doubtless he would have us understand that to them, as to the Eleven, Christ spoke; that on them, as on the Eleven, Christ laid the burden of His great commission; and that as they listened to His voice, as they learned something of the work which was to be the portion of His followers, their misgivings probably did not find a precise and logical answer, but melted away in the enthusiasm of service.

2. The text may well fascinate the theologian, for it has something to say about the nature of God. It throws some light on the Person of Christ, and is a part of the very significant testimony which He bears to Himself. The text may also engage the thoughts of the ecclesiastic, for it has suggestions to make as to the ministry of the Church and the conditions of admission to the membership of the Church. But the text is of supreme interest to the missionary, because it is the charter of his enterprise, and sets forth four things concerning the enterprise to guide his work, test his success, quicken his conscience, support his faith, feed his courage and enthusiasm—its aim, its field, its obligation, and its encouragement. The aim of missionary enterprise is to make disciples of Christ, receive them into the fellowship of His Church, and teach them His will and train them in His grace. The field of missionary enterprise is the world as represented by "all the nations"; the obligation of missionary enterprise rests on the final command of Him who wields all authority in heaven and on earth, and has the right to command; the encouragement to missionary enterprise is the Presence in "all the days" of the risen Christ who commands all the means necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

This great utterance of our Lord falls into three parts:

I. A Great Claim—"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."

II. A Great Commission — "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

III. A Great Assurance—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I.

The Claim.

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."

1. In these words Jesus, standing on the resurrection side of His grave, in the simplest language made the sublimest claim when He thus declared Himself to be King by Divine right, and therefore absolute in His Kingship. The word admits of no qualification. The claim admits of no limitation. In that moment He claimed authority in the material, mental, and moral realms. The application of His claim to this world does by no means exhaust it. He swept the compass with a reach far wider, more spacious, and stupendous. Not only on earth but in heaven is authority given to Him. The one phrase, "in heaven and on earth," includes the whole creation of God. It is manifest that He is excluded who created, and who puts all things under the feet of His King. It is equally manifest that all is included which comes within the scope of that comprehensive word, the creation of God. We may interpret this final claim of Jesus by the prayer He taught His disciples: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." Having completed His ministry of teaching; having accomplished His exodus and resurrection, at last He claimed authority in heaven and on earth, thus assuming the throne of empire over the whole creation of God, included in the terms of the prayer, and now defined in the words, "as in heaven, so on earth."

¶ Who is it that dares thus confidently to make this amazing claim? Who is it that utters it as if it were a simple matter of

fact about which there was no question? Not merely power or might (δύναμις), such as a great conqueror might claim, but "*authority*" (ἐξουσία), as something which is His by right, conferred upon Him by One who has the right to bestow it (Rev. ii. 27). And "*all* authority," embracing everything over which rule and dominion can be exercised; and that not only "upon earth," which would be an authority overwhelming in its extensiveness, but also "in heaven." Human thought loses itself in the attempt to understand what must be comprehended in such authority as this. Nothing less than the Divine government of the whole universe and of the Kingdom of Heaven has been given to the Risen Lord. In more than one Epistle, St. Paul piles up term upon term in order to try to express the honour and glory and power which the Father has bestowed upon the Son whom He has raised from the dead. The glorified Christ is "above every principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. i. 21; comp. Col. i. 16–21; Phil. ii. 9–11). Nevertheless, with all his fulness of language, the Apostle does not get beyond, for it is impossible to get beyond, the majestic, inexhaustible reach of the simple statement which Christ, with such serenity, makes here.[1]

2. The words "hath been given" point to a definite time when this all-embracing authority was conferred. *When* was it given? Let another portion of Scripture answer the question—"Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." *Then* to the Man Jesus was given authority over heaven and earth. All the early Christian documents concur in this view of the connexion between the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His investiture with this sovereign power. Listen to Paul: "Becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Listen to Peter: who "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory." Hear the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "we see Jesus . . . for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." Hearken to John: to Him "who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." Look with his eyes to the vision of the "Lamb as it had been slain," enthroned in the midst of the

[1] A. Plummer.

throne, and say whether this unanimous consent of the earliest Christian teachers is explicable on any reasonable grounds, unless there had been underlying it just the words of the text, and the Master Himself had taught them that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth. As it seems impossible to account for the existence of the Church if we deny the resurrection, so it seems impossible to account for the faith of the earliest stratum of the Christian Church without the acceptance of some such declaration as this, as having come from the Lord Himself. And so the hands that were pierced with the nails wield the sceptre of the universe, and on the brows that were wounded and bleeding with the crown of thorns are wreathed the many crowns of universal Kinghood.

¶ The resurrection of Christ marked the acceptance of His work by the Father, and revealed the triumph in which that work ended. Death and all the power of the enemy were overcome, and victory was attained. But the resurrection of Christ was also His emergence—His *due* emergence—into the power and blessedness of victorious life. In the Person of Christ life in God, and unto God, had descended into the hard conditions set for Him who would associate a world of sinners to Himself. In the resurrection the triumph of that enterprise came to light. Now, done with sin, and free from death, and asserting His superiority to all humiliation and all conflict, He rose in the fulness of a power which He was entitled also to communicate. He rose, with full right and power to save. And so His resurrection denotes Christ as able to inspire life, and to make it victorious in His members.[1]

3. This claim means the success of His life purpose. He had told His disciples that He would build His Church; that He would lead it as an army in conflict against evil and its issues, and in victory over all, including the very gates of Hades; that He would erect a moral standard, and make them, His disciples, His interpreters thereof, giving them "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Immediately following this declaration of purpose, He had spoken to them of the necessity for the cross, and they, with faith faltering, had seen Him die. Notwithstanding all He had foretold them, they looked upon the cross as evidence of His failure to accomplish His purposes. From their standpoint of

[1] R. Rainy, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 239.

observation, it was impossible for one who died to build a Church, and lead an army, and insist upon a moral standard. But now they saw Him in all the glory of resurrection life, and knew that therein He demonstrated His power to build a Church, having passed through death and become the firstborn from among the dead. They knew that He had the power to combat sin and overcome it, for He had taken hold of death, which is the ultimate of sin, and in His mastery of death had revealed His ability to deal with sin. He had lived in perfect conformity with His own ethical standard, and when His life resulted in His rejection by men and His being put to death, it had seemed as though the impossibility of obedience was proved; but now, standing in the power of risen life, He claimed authority, and thereby suggested that His own victories vindicated His right to be the ethical Teacher of the world.

4. But in this claim we have not merely the attestation of the completeness of Christ's work, we have also the elevation of Manhood to enthronement with Divinity. For the *new* thing that came to Jesus after His resurrection was that His humanity was taken into, and became participant of, "the glory which I had with thee, before the world was." Then our nature, when perfect and sinless, is so cognate and kindred with the Divine that humanity is capable of being invested with, and of bearing, that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In that elevation of the Man Christ Jesus, we may read a prophecy, which shall not be unfulfilled, of the destiny of all those who conform to Him through faith, love and obedience, finally to sit down with Him on His throne, even as He is set down with the Father on His throne.

¶ No system thinks so condemnatorily of human nature as it is, none thinks so glowingly of human nature as it may become, as does the religion of the cross. There are bass notes far down beyond the limits of the scale to which ears dulled by the world and sin and sorrow are sensitive; and there are clear, high tones, thrilling and shrilling far above the range of perception of such ears. The man that is in the lowest depths may rise with Jesus to the highest, but it must be by the same road by which the Master went. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," and only "if." There is no other path to the throne but

the cross. *Via crucis, via lucis*—the way of the cross is the way of light. It is to those who have accepted their Gethsemanes and their Calvarys that He appoints a kingdom, as His Father has appointed unto Him.[1]

II.

The Commission.

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

The all-ruling Christ calls for the universal proclamation of His sovereignty by His disciples. He craves no empty rule, no mere elevation by virtue of Divine supremacy, over men. He regards that elevation as incomplete without the voluntary surrender of men to become His subjects and champions. Without its own consent He does not count that His universal power is established in a human heart. Though that dominion be all-embracing like the ocean, and stretching into all corners of the universe, and dominating over all the ages, yet in that ocean there may stand up black and dry rocks, barren as they are dry, and blasted as they are black, because, with the awful power of a human will, men have said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." It is willing subjects that Christ seeks, in order to make the Divine grant of authority a reality.

¶ This command must appear, when we consider it, to be simply astonishing. Here is, as it seems, a Jewish peasant, surrounded by a small company of uneducated followers, bidding them address themselves in His name to races, ancient, powerful, refined; to win their intellectual and moral submission to doctrines and precepts propounded by Himself. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." The only idea of empire of which the world knew was the empire of material force. Wherever the legions of Rome had penetrated, there followed the judge and the tax-collector: and the nations submitted to what they could not resist, until at length their masters became too weak to control or to protect them. As for an empire of souls, the notion was unheard of. No philosopher could found it, since a philosopher's usual occupation consisted mainly in making intel-

[1] A. Maclaren.

lectual war upon his predecessors or contemporaries. No existing religion could aim at it, since the existing religions were believed to be merely the products of national instincts and aspirations; each religion was part of the furniture of a nation, or at most of a race. Celsus, looking out on Christianity in the second century of our era, with the feelings of Gibbon or of Voltaire, said that a man must be out of his mind to think that Greeks and Barbarians, Romans and Scythians, bondmen and freemen, could ever have one religion. Nevertheless this was the purpose of our Lord. The Apostles were bidden to go and make disciples of all the nations. Yes; all the nations. There was no nation in such religious circumstances, none so cultivated, none so degraded, as to be able to dispense with the teaching and healing power of Jesus Christ, or to be beyond the reach of His salvation.[1]

1. The great aim of the missionary is to make disciples. No doubt he is a civilizer, but he does not go to heathen lands in the interests of civilization; he goes to proclaim salvation by grace. He is the friend of commerce, education, freedom of every kind, and rapidly promotes them wherever he goes; but he does not go to China, India, and the islands of the South Seas in order to circulate Western ideas of trade, culture, good government, and social weal; he goes to represent the character, announce the will, illustrate the grace, offer the salvation, and promote the reign of the God whom Christ has made real and saving to us. And whatever improvements he may help to make in the outward conditions in which the people live, he has not fulfilled his distinctive mission until he has given them "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and won them to a trust in and love of God that will free them from their idolatries, cleanse them from their immoralities, and make them worshippers with intelligent conviction, zeal and courage in their devotion. Indeed to give them Western civilization without Western religion, with its powerful ethic to illumine and discipline their conscience, would be to multiply their power of sin and mischief and tend to their corruption. To give China, with her vast population and material resources, the civilization of Europe and America without the Christ who is its light and salt would be to make her the menace of the world, and to create a "yellow peril" indeed.

[1] H. P. Liddon, *Easter in St. Paul's*, 398.

¶ I was hearing the other day the testimony of a Coptic judge in Egypt as to how the very idea of justice had for the first time dawned upon the fellah in Egypt when he saw that he, poor man, was going to get his Nile water, a thing hitherto inconceivable, equally with his rich neighbour. We bring justice, and yet even the justice of administration, glorious as that gift is, does not get to the inner heart and conscience of men. It does not give them the peace to live by in their private life; it does not create character; it does not get to the conscience or the heart.[1]

2. "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." "Baptism," it has been well said, "is the oldest ceremonial ordinance that Christianity possesses; it is the only one which is inherited from Judaism." Immersion of the body in water is naturally symbolical and suggestive of purification; so, in the sacrament of Baptism, the one essential of entrance into the Kingdom of God is visibly set forth. It is a Kingdom into which nothing unclean can enter, yet in Baptism the right of every man to inherit the Kingdom is declared, and the condition of admission revealed. Baptism, therefore, is the token of a universal Church; it is not the symbol of a sect, or the badge of a party; it is a visible witness to the world of a common humanity united in God.

¶ Dr. Moritz Busch, the Boswell of Prince Bismarck, relates this story. It happened some time ago that King Frederick of Denmark conferred upon the great German Chancellor the Grand Cross of the Danebrog Order. One of the rules of that order is that every one who receives the decoration of its cross must set up his name and arms in the principal church at Copenhagen, with a motto which must be chosen by himself, and must bear a double or ambiguous meaning. "So I hit upon this motto," said Prince Bismarck, "'*In Trinitate robur*,' alluding to the trefoil, the clover, which was the old device of our family." "And what was the other meaning?" said Dr. Busch. "Was it, 'My strength is in the Triune God'?" And the answer was given with a solemn gravity "Yes, just so; that is exactly what I meant."[2]

3. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Those who come under the influence of the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus, and, yielding to it, pass

[1] Bishop Gore.

[2] J. E. C. Welldon, *The Fire upon the Altar*, 59.

through His death and resurrection into living union with Him, are to be taught "to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." They are to realize in their own fellowship the actuality of His Kingship, and are to manifest through their corporate life the glory and grace of the Kingdom of God. This new society is formed wherever, as a result of the proclamation of His Lordship, men and women yield thereto; a society of those who not only believe in His Lordship, but bend to it, and exhibit to the world the result of His Kingship in their individual lives and social fellowship. We hear a great deal in these days about the worthlessness of mere dogmatic Christianity. Jesus Christ anticipated all that talk, and guarded it from exaggeration. For what He tells us here that we are to train ourselves and others in is not creed but conduct; not things to be believed or *credenda*, but things to be done or *agenda*—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." A creed that is not wrought out in actions is empty; conduct that is not informed, penetrated, regulated by creed is unworthy of a man, not to say of a Christian. What we are to know we are to know in order that we may do, and so inherit the benediction, which is never bestowed upon them that know, but upon them that, knowing these things, are blessed *in*, as well as *for*, the doing of them.

¶ Surely, if there be anything with which metaphysics have nothing to do, and where a plain man, without skill to walk in the arduous paths of abstruse reasoning, may yet find himself at home, it is religion. For the object of religion is *conduct*; and conduct is really, however men may overlay it with philosophical disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world. That is to say, it is the simplest thing in the world as far as *understanding* is concerned; as regards *doing*, it is the hardest thing in the world. Here is the difficulty, to *do* what we very well know ought to be done; and instead of facing this, men have searched out another with which they occupy themselves by preference—the origin of what is called the moral sense, the genesis and physiology of conscience, and so on. No one denies that here, too, is difficulty, or that the difficulty is a proper object for the human faculties to be exercised upon; but the difficulty here is speculative. It is not the difficulty of religion, which is a practical one; and it often tends to divert attention from this. Yet surely the difficulty of religion is great enough by itself, if men would but consider it, to satisfy the most voracious appetite for difficulties. It extends to

rightness in the whole range of what we call *conduct*; in three-fourths, therefore, at the very lowest computation, of human life. The only doubt is whether we ought not to make the range of conduct wider still, and to say it is four-fifths of human life, or five-sixths. But it is better to be under the mark than over it; so let us be content with reckoning conduct as three-fourths of human life.[1]

III.

The Assurance.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

There are four ways in which this verse has been regarded. Some say that the words are fiction: that they were never spoken by the Lord; that they were born in another man's mind; that they have no vital relationship with the thought and purpose of Jesus, and therefore we should employ a penknife and cut them out. The second statement made concerning them is that the report is accurate, but the claim presumptuous. We are told that, like all other great leaders of men, the Nazarene had moments of unillumined ecstasy. There were times when, like Mohammed, like Luther, like John Wesley, He lost the true perspective and purpose of things. Or, to put it more plainly, these are the words of a fanatic, and due allowance must be made for exaggeration. Then there is a third way. The words were certainly spoken, but they were never intended to be taken literally. They are symbolic and figurative, and we must beware not to spoil them by getting away from the symbolism. We must exercise the imagination and interpret them upon the purely human plane. The fourth way is this: that the words are simply, naturally, literally and gloriously true; that the Master said them; that He meant just what He said, that He—Jesus the Christ, a personal, conscious, intelligent presence—is for ever abiding with His disciples, sharing all the difficulties of the pilgrim road, participating in their triumphs right away to the end of the world. That is the witness, the overwhelming witness, of the Christian Church.

[1] Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, chap. i.

1. What then do the words signify? First of all, they promise *a personal presence.* The assurance of Jehovah's presence —" certainly I will be with thee "—is repeated ever and again in the histories and oracles of the Old Testament. To Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, to the Judges, to Jeremiah, to Israel in the land of exile it was vouchsafed as the seal of pardon or as the pledge of guidance and of needed strength. But the promise then must have seemed vague and uncertain. Jehovah was far away, unseen, an awful Judge and King. The Incarnation transfigures man's whole conception of God's nearness to him. Christ speaks as Friend to friend, loving and loved. The promise is Divine as of old, but now it is human also. The Speaker we know has had His part in flesh and blood, in toils and temptations, in life and death.

¶ George Eliot said that the Lord Jesus, when He was upon earth, gave a sort of impulse to the race, and that impulse remains to our own day and, therefore, He lives. It is something like an engine, shunting on the railway. The engine gives the train a sudden impact and then stops. And the trucks continue on the strength of the impact given, while the engine remains dead. And, says George Eliot, and all who believe in her teaching, it is perfectly true that He is with us now in a dumb, vague, blessed impulse. Is that your Jesus? If I may recall my illustration of the train, I will tell you of my Jesus. When the Lord came and put Himself on the train He went with it, and He is with it now. "I am with you, not merely as some dumb, contributory impulse, a dying dynamic; I am with you a living presence, conscious, intelligent, knowing you and offering the powers of the Infinite to save you and to complete the plan of your life, and lift you into a life of holiness with God."[1]

2. It is *an abiding presence*: "I am with you alway." The Lord, using the simple idiom of His native tongue, says "all the days." The pledge is precise and detailed. It goes hand in hand with the Church into all the vicissitudes of her long and perilous journey. It has never been withdrawn or modified. The history of the Christian centuries is the record of its fulfilment. It is ours to-day—this critical day of the Church's life—to make us courageous in face of difficulty and calm in the midst of controversy.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

That word "alway" separates Him from every other teacher the world has ever seen. If you want to know how infinite is the separation, take down the biographies of some of the superlatively great leaders of the human race. Listen to their last words, and when you have their message in your ears come back to this, and you will feel that you are in another world. Take that great book of Plato in which he describes the last few moments when Socrates is leaving his disciples. It is a beautiful picture, tragic, pathetic, winsome. But you never find Socrates even whispering that when he has left his disciples he will remain with them, a personal attendant spirit among them. Take the Apostle Paul himself—next to the Lord, perhaps, the greatest man among men—and read his Second Epistle to Timothy, where you get his almost farewell word: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth"—I will remain with you? Not a suggestion of it. The great men of our race do not come within an infinite distance of suggesting that they will remain among their disciples. This makes the Lord unique: "Lo, I am with you alway."

¶ Charles Lamb said that he sat at his desk in the East India House till the wood had entered his soul, so wooden were his duties. When I think of this I think there is nothing that cannot become monotonous, and again I think of one of the greatest souls that God ever made, pacing the fringe of the Sinaitic desert for forty years, the companion of sheep, a solitary soul; and for forty years more leading about and about, a march without a goal, a people more stupid than the sheep, and I read "he *endured*." How? Through Divine companionship. "The Lord spoke with Moses face to face." Then all monotony went. "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." And I think of a greater than Moses—the greatest of all—living for thirty years in the monotonous routine of an Oriental village, a peasant's cottage, and a carpenter's shop, and I say, He knows monotony, and He is with me on the dull bit of road. He may be the companion, and blessed be drudgery if He be near and I may feel the warmth of His love.[1]

¶ Look into any life which has been shaped and fashioned by living faith in Jesus, and you will see this promise fulfilled.

[1] C. Brown, *The Message of God*, 54.

Where the many toil and suffer,
  There am I among Mine own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth,
  There am I with him alone.

Never more thou needest seek Me,
  I am with thee everywhere:
Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me;
  Cleave the wood, and I am there.

3. It is *a victorious presence.* The phrase "the end of the world" may be better rendered "the consummation of the age." The ultimate victory of the King is implied. There was no fear of failure in the heart of the King. The age initiated by His first advent will be consummated at His second; and through all the toil He abides with His people, leading them in perpetual triumph as they abide in fellowship with Him.

¶ One of the most frequently quoted of the promises of Christ he held to be largely a conditional promise. As he interpreted it, "Lo, I am with you alway," following as it did the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," left the impression that, failing the fulfilment of the commission, the promise was largely invalidated. On the other hand, he found a deep and perennial conviction, born of his experiences in the dangers and difficulties of his missionary career, that all men and women (and all Churches) that obediently carry out the command have still the Promise of Omnipotence—the Everlasting Word—of the Abiding Presence of the Son of God.[1]

¶ When John Wesley had done his work and was even now passing within the veil, we are told that, gathering up what strength remained to him, he cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us." He had put Christ's promise to the test, as few have done; and he had found it true. Christ's presence is for all the days of the Church's history, for each hour of the day of every Christian man's life—the light of life's solemn evening, but no less surely the strength of life's strenuous noon, and the joy of life's bright morning. "The best of all is, God, God in Christ, is with us."[2]

¶ I was reading the other day that glorious book of Charles Kingsley's, entitled, *Yeast.* You remember how Nevarga, dirty, habit-stained, morally and spiritually broken, feeling utterly

[1] *John G. Paton: Later Years,* 35.

[2] Bishop Chase, in *The Cambridge Review,* xx. p. xciii.

defiled, kneels away in the desert by a furze bush, and lifts up his heart to God and cries, "Then I rose up like a man and I spoke right out into the dumb, black air, and I said, 'If Thou wilt be my God, if Thou wilt be on my side, good Lord who died for me, I will be Thine, villain as I am, if Thou canst make anything of me.'" And Charles Kingsley says the furze bush began to glow with sacred flame, and there in the desert the Lord Jesus found a new companion and made a new friend.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.

Printed by
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED
Edinburgh

A Companion Series to 'The Great Texts of the Bible.'

The Greater Men and Women of the Bible

By DR. JAMES HASTINGS

TO BE COMPLETE IN SIX VOLUMES, OF WHICH THREE ARE NOW READY—

ADAM to JOSEPH;
MOSES to SAMSON;
RUTH to NAAMAN.

'This book is intended for preachers, but may certainly be read by others with pleasure and profit. . . . Beside the direct instruction given in the text, the literature of interpretation, criticism, and archæology which a preacher ought to know is referred to systematically, and the references are the right ones. The book is workman-like.'—*Guardian.*

'The interest of these Bible lives is inexhaustible, and this volume will enrich every sermon upon them.'—*London Quarterly Review.*

'The men and women are made to live before us, and although modern criticism is not ignored, it is not allowed to run riot with the history. . . . The volumes are not to take the place of clerical study and to dispense with sermon preparation. They are to help preparation, and of their kind they are the best helps we know.'
Record.

The work will be complete in Six Volumes at the published price of **Ten Shillings** each. If the *Complete Series* is subscribed for, the Set will be supplied at the Subscription rate of

SIX VOLUMES for 36s. net.

COMPLETE PROSPECTUS ON APPLICATION.

T. & T. CLARK, Edinburgh and London

Charles—Canon R. H., D.Litt., D.D., Westminster.

STUDIES IN THE APOCALYPSE. Post 8vo. **4s. 6d. net.**

The first two chapters contain a short history of the interpretation of the Apocalypse, and show, so far as possible, the real advances made. In the last three chapters the author has set forth some of the conclusions which he has arrived at in the course of a prolonged study of the Apocalypse and the literature to which it belongs. That these conclusions are in the main valid he is fully convinced.

Christlieb—Prof., D.D., Bonn.

MODERN DOUBT AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF. *Authorised English Translation.* Fourth Edition. 8vo. **6s. net.**

'We recommend the volume as one of the most valuable and important among recent contributions to our apologetic literature.'—*Guardian.*

HOMILETIC: Lectures on Preaching. Post 8vo. **7s. 6d.**

'Valuable for fulness of learning and thoroughness of discussion and suitability for practical purposes.'—Prof. JAMES ROBERTSON, D.D.

Clarke—Prof. W. N., D.D.

'Dr. Clarke's charm both of thought and expression secure a welcome for anything he may write.'—*Bookman.*

AN OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. Nineteenth Edition. Post 8vo. **7s. 6d.**

'Has it ever happened to any of our readers to take up a work on systematic theology and open it with a sigh of weariness and dread, and find himself fascinated and enthralled and compelled to read on to the last word? Let any one who craves a new experience of this kind procure Dr. Clarke's "Outline." We guarantee that he will learn more, with greater pleasure, than he is likely to learn in any other systematic theology.'—Dr. MARCUS DODS, in the *British Weekly.*

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD. (*International Theological Library.*) Post 8vo. **10s. 6d.**

'A brief summary of the contents will give but a slight conception of the value of this work as a study in Christian theism. We welcome and heartily commend it as a valuable and permanent contribution to our knowledge of the greatest of all subjects.'—*Methodist Recorder.*

SIXTY YEARS WITH THE BIBLE. A Record of Experience. Cr. 8vo. **4s. 6d. net.**

'A most suggestive survey of the changes in the view and treatment of the Scriptures which have taken place in his own lifetime and experience. Few more suggestive books on this great central theme have been published for many a day.'—*Methodist Recorder.*

THE IDEAL OF JESUS. Post 8vo. **5s. net.**

'In this work Dr. Clarke is at his best. It is a sympathetic, genial, and appreciative study.'—*British Weekly.*

THE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN THEOLOGY. Cr. 8vo. **4s.**

'A work of supreme value.'—*Christian World.*

WHAT SHALL WE THINK OF CHRISTIANITY? Cr. 8vo. **2s. 6d.**

'Dr. Clarke's "Outline of Christian Theology" had a reception rarely accorded to an American book. This little book is written in the same charming simplicity of language, and its thoughts are so great and simple that it is likely to find an equally warm welcome.'—*Expository Times.*

CAN I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER? Cr. 8vo. **3s.**

'Dr. Clarke, has here, as elsewhere, shown himself a master in the art of popularising Christian apologetics.'—*Christian World.*

Clark—Prof. W. R., D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.

THE ANGLICAN REFORMATION. (*Eras of the Christian Church.*) Post 8vo. 6s.

'Not only is the book marked by great fairness of dealing, and thoroughness of purpose, but it has (what not every historical work possesses) a distinction of style and an effectiveness of setting which it is a pleasure to notice.'—*Rock.*

PASCAL AND THE PORT ROYALISTS. (*The World's Epoch-Makers.*) 3s.

'One of the most interesting volumes in this Series, giving a vivid account of Pascal's career, an acute analysis of his writings, and a careful appreciation of his character and work.'—*Critical Review.*

WITNESSES TO CHRIST. A Contribution to Christian Apologetics. Cr. 8vo. 4s.

Clemen—Prof. CARL, Ph.D., Th.D., Bonn.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY AND ITS NON-JEWISH SOURCES. *Authorised Translation.* 8vo. 9s. net.

'There is no handbook to the subject in English or German which rivals this comprehensive and serviceable treatise, and its real importance entitles it to the care which the translator has evidently bestowed upon its English dress.'—*British Weekly.*

Clifford—JOHN, D.D., London.

THE GOSPEL OF GLADNESS. (*Scholar as Preacher Series.*) 4s. 6d. net.

'A better title for the volume could not possibly have been found, for from cover to cover it is permeated with that spirit of buoyant optimism which has characterised the great Apostles of the Evangel.'—*Methodist Times.*

Coats—R. H., M.A., B.D.

TYPES OF ENGLISH PIETY. Cr. 8vo. 4s. net.

'Mr. Coats has interpreted for us the religious tendencies of our day with a balanced judgment and with a fine literary finish which make his book delightful and profitable reading. We heartily commend this discriminating and illuminating work.'—*London Quarterly Review.*

Cohu—Rev. J. R.

VITAL PROBLEMS OF RELIGION. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.

CONTENTS:—Through Nature to Nature's God; or, The Evolution Story—The Problem of Evil—Religion and Science—Personality in Man—The Freedom of the Will—Conscience, or God's Voice within us—Religion and Theology—Philosophy's Living Personal God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—A Philosophic Creed.

Cooke—Canon G. A., D.D.

THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION. (*Scholar as Preacher Series.*) 4s. 6d. net.

'Dr. Cooke seems to experience special pleasure, as he certainly displays masterly acumen, in treating topics suggested by some of the most difficult and disputed texts in the Bible.'—*Homiletic Review.*

The World's Epoch-Makers

Edited by OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A.

IN NEAT CROWN 8VO VOLUMES. PRICE **3s.** EACH.

'An excellent series of biographical studies.'—*Athenæum.*

Buddha and Buddhism — ARTHUR LILLIE.

Luther and the German Reformation —Principal T. M. LINDSAY, D.D.

Wesley and Methodism—F. J. SNELL, M.A.

Cranmer and the English Reformation—A. D. INNES, M.A.

William Herschel and his Work—JAMES SIME, M.A.

Francis and Dominic—Prof. J. HERKLESS, D.D.

Savonarola—G. M'HARDY, D.D.

Anselm and his Work—Prof. A. C. WELCH, Theol.D.

Origen and Greek Patristic Theology —W. FAIRWEATHER, D.D.

Muhammad and his Power—P. DE LACY JOHNSTONE, M.A.(Oxon.).

The Medici and the Italian Renaissance—OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A.

Plato—Prof. D. G. RITCHIE, LL.D.

Wycliffe and the Lollards—Rev. J. C. CARRICK, B.D.

Pascal and the Port Royalists—Prof. W. R. CLARK, LL.D.

Euclid—Prof. THOMAS SMITH, LL.D.

Hegel and Hegelianism — Prof. R. MACKINTOSH, D.D.

Hume and his Influence on Philosophy and Theology—Prof. J. ORR, D.D.

Rousseau and Naturalism in Life and Thought—Prof. W. H. HUDSON, M.A.

Descartes, Spinoza, and the New Philosophy—Principal J. IVERACH, D.D.

Socrates—Rev. J. T. FORBES, M.A.

Newman and his Influence on Religious Life and Thought — Prof. C. SAROLEA, Ph.D.

Marcus Aurelius and the Later Stoics —F. W. BUSSELL, D.D.

Kant and his Philosophical Revolution—Prof. R. M. WENLEY, D.Sc.

Eras of the Christian Church

Complete in TEN VOLUMES.

PRICE **6s.** EACH; OR **£2, 5s.** NET PER SET.

'Studies in the history of the Church which are always interesting and often very picturesque.'—*Guardian.*

The Age of Hildebrand—Prof. M. R. VINCENT, D.D.,

The Great Western Schism—CLINTON LOCKE, D.D.

The Age of the Crusades—J. M. LUDLOW, D.D.

The Ecumenical Councils—Prof. W. P. DU BOSE, D.D.

The Age of the Renascence—HENRY VAN DYKE, D.D., and PAUL VAN DYKE.

The Anglican Reformation — Prof. W. R. CLARK, LL.D., D.C.L., Toronto.

The Age of Charlemagne — Prof. CHARLES L. WELLS.

The Post-Apostolic Age — LUCIUS WATERMAN, D.D.

The Apostolic Age—Prof. J. VERNON BARTLET, D.D.

The Protestant Reformation—Prof. W. WALKER, D.D.

A TOPOGRAPHICAL, PHYSICAL, and BIBLICAL

MAP OF PALESTINE

By Principal GEORGE ADAM SMITH, LL.D., and J. G. BARTHOLOMEW, F.R.G.S.

Compiled from the latest Surveys and Researches. Showing all identified Biblical sites, together with the modern place-names, with complete Index.

'That it will supersede all maps in existence there can be no doubt.'—**Expository Times.**

Price—Mounted on cloth, in case, 10/6. Mounted on rollers, 15/-. For Tourists—In two sheets, in leather wallet, 15/-.

LEXICON SYRIACUM

By CARL BROCKELMANN. Præfatus est Th. Noldeke.

'Fulfils what has long been the most conspicuous *lacuna* in Semitic bibliography.'—Prof. A. R. S. Kennedy, D.D.

In handsome roxburghe binding, 30/- net.

GRIMM'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Translated, Revised, and Enlarged by Prof. JOSEPH H. THAYER, D.D.

Fourth Edition, 36/-.

BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL LEXICON OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

By Prof. HERMANN CREMER, D.D.

Demy 4to, 38/-.

A Complete Catalogue of Publications will be sent to any address on application.

T. & T. CLARK, 38 George St., Edinburgh
Stationers' Hall, London

London Agents: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, & Co. Ltd.